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THE

# PILLARS OF SOCIETY

*A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS*

By HENRIK IBSEN

TRANSLATED BY  
WILLIAM ARCHER

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BOSTON  
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

## CHARACTERS.

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|---|--|--|
| <p>CONSUL BERNICK.<br/>         MRS. BERNICK, <i>his wife</i>.<br/>         OLAF, <i>their son, a boy of thirteen</i>.<br/>         MISS BERNICK (MARTHA), <i>the Consul's sister</i>.<br/>         JOHAN TÖNNESEN, <i>Mrs. Bernick's younger brother</i>.<br/>         MISS HESSEL, <i>her elder step-sister (LONA)</i>.<br/>         HILMAR TÖNNESEN, <i>Mrs. Bernick's cousin</i>.<br/>         RECTOR RÖRLUND.*</p> |  | <p>RUMMEL, }<br/>         VIGELAND, } <i>Merchants</i>.<br/>         SANDSTAD, }<br/>         DINA DORF, <i>a young girl living in the Consul's house</i>.<br/>         KRAP, <i>the Consul's clerk</i>.<br/>         SHIPBUILDER AUNE.<br/>         MRS. RUMMEL.<br/>         MRS. POSTMASTER HOLT.<br/>         MRS. DOCTOR LYNGE.<br/>         MISS RUMMEL.<br/>         MISS HOLT.</p> |
|---|--|--|

*Townspeople and others, foreign sailors, steamboat passengers, etc.*  
*The action takes place in Consul Bernick's house, in a small Norwegian coast-town.*

\* In the original, "Adjunkt" or Assistant-master. The word "Rector" is used in the Scotch sense of a schoolmaster, not in the English sense of a clergyman.

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—The title of the original is "Samfundets Stötter," literally "Society's Pillars." In the text the word "Samfund" has sometimes been translated "society," sometimes "community." The noun "Stötte," a pillar, has for its correlative the verb "at stötte," to support; so that the English phrase, "to support society," represents the Norwegian "at stötte Samfundet." The reader may bear in mind, then, that this phrase is, in the original, a direct allusion to the title of the play.]

# THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY :

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS.

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## ACT I.

[A large garden-room in CONSUL BERNICK'S house. In front, to the left, a door leads into the Consul's office ; farther back, in the same wall, a similar door. In the middle of the opposite wall is a large entrance door. The wall in the background is almost entirely composed of plate-glass, with an open door-way leading to a broad flight of steps, over which a sun-shade is let down. Beyond the steps a part of the garden can be seen, shut in by a trellis-fence with a little gate. On the other side of the fence is a street consisting of small, brightly-painted wooden houses. It is summer and the sun shines warmly. Now and then people pass along the street : they stop and speak to each other : customers come and go at the little corner shop, and so forth.

In the garden-room a number of ladies are gathered round a table. At the head of the table sits MRS. BERNICK. On her left sit MRS. HOLT and her daughter ; next to them, MRS. and MISS RUMMEL.

*On* MRS. BERNICK's right sit MRS. LYNGE, MISS BERNICK (MARTHA), and DINA DORF. *All the ladies are busy sewing. On the table lie large heaps of half-finished and cut-out linen, and other articles of clothing. Farther back, at a little table on which are two flower-pots and a glass of eau sucré, sits* RECTOR RÖRLUND, *reading from a book with gilt edges, a word here and there being heard by the audience. Out in the garden OLAF BERNICK is running about, shooting at marks with a cross-bow.*

*Presently* SHIPBUILDER AUNE *enters quietly by the door on the right. The reading is stopped for a moment; MRS. BERNICK nods to him and points to the left-hand door. AUNE goes quietly to the Consul's door and knocks once or twice, softly. KRAP, the Consul's clerk, opens the door and comes out with his hat in his hand and papers under his arm.]*

KRAP. Oh, it's you that were knocking!

AUNE. The Consul sent for me.

KRAP. Yes; but he can't see you just now; he has commissioned me——

AUNE. You? I would much rather——

KRAP. Commissioned me to tell you this: You must stop these Saturday lectures to the workmen.

AUNE. Indeed? I thought I might use my leisure time——

KRAP. You must not use your leisure time to make the men useless in work-time. Last Saturday you must needs talk of the harm our new machines and new method of work will cause to the workmen. Why do you do so?



AUNE. I do it to support society.

KRAP. That's a strange idea! The Consul says it's undermining society.

AUNE. My "society" is not the Consul's "society," Mr. Krap! As foreman of the Industrial Society, I have to——

KRAP. Your first duty is as foreman of Consul Bernick's shipyard. Your first duty is to the society called Bernick & Co., for by it we all live.—Well, now you know what the Consul had to say to you.

AUNE. The Consul would have said it differently, Mr. Krap! But I know well enough what I have to thank for this. It's that cursed American that's put in for repairs. These people think work can be done here as they do it over there, and that——

KRAP. Yes, yes—I have no time to go into generalities. You now know the Consul's wishes, and that's enough. Now you'd better go down to the yard again; you're sure to be wanted; I shall be down myself presently.—I beg your pardon, ladies! (*He bows, and goes out through the garden and down the street. AUNE goes quietly out to the right. RECTOR RÖRLUND, who during the whole of the foregoing conversation has continued reading, presently closes the book with a bang.*)

RÖRLUND. There, my dear ladies, that is the end.

MRS. RUMMEL. Oh, what an instructive tale!

MRS. HOLT. And so moral!

MRS. BERNICK. Such a book really gives one a great deal to think over.

RÖRLUND. Yes—it forms a refreshing contrast to what we unhappily see every day, both in newspapers and magazines. The gilded and rouged outside, flaunted by

the great communities—what does it really conceal? Hollowness and rottenness, if I may say so. They have no moral foundation under their feet. In one word—they are whited sepulchres, these great communities, nowadays.

MRS. HOLT. Too true! too true!

MRS. RUMMEL. We have only to look at the crew of the American ship which is lying here just now.

RÖRLUND. Oh, I won't speak of such scum of humanity. But even in the higher classes—how do matters stand there? Doubt and fermenting restlessness on every side; the mind unsettled, and insecurity in all relations of life. See how the family is undermined over there!—how a brazen spirit of destruction is attacking the most vital truths!

DINA (*without looking up*). But are not many great things done there too?

RÖRLUND. Great things?—I don't understand.

MRS. HOLT (*astonished*). Good heavens, Dina——!

MRS. RUMMEL (*at the same time*). Oh, Dina, how can you?

RÖRLUND. I don't think it would be for our good if such "great things" became common among us. No—we at home here ought to thank God that things are as they are with us. Of course a tare now and then springs up among the wheat, alas! but we honestly do our best to weed it out. What we have to do, ladies, is to keep society pure—to exclude from it all the untried elements which an impatient age would force upon us.

MRS. HOLT. And of these there are more than enough, unhappily.

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes, last year we only escaped by a

hair's-breadth having a railroad carried through the town.

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, Karsten managed to block the way.

RÖRLUND. Providentially, Mrs. Bernick! You may be sure that your husband was a tool in a higher hand when he refused to support that scheme.

MRS. BERNICK. And yet the papers said such horrid things about him! But we are quite forgetting to thank you, my dear Rector. It is really more than kind of you to sacrifice so much of your time to us.

RÖRLUND. Oh, not at all; now, in the holidays——

MRS. BERNICK. Yes, yes, but it is a sacrifice nevertheless.

RÖRLUND (*drawing his chair nearer*). Don't speak of it, my dear lady. Do not all of you make sacrifices for a good cause? And do you not make them willingly and gladly? The Lapsed and Lost, for whom we are working, are like wounded soldiers on a battle-field; you, ladies, are the Red Cross Guild, the sisters of mercy, who pick lint for these unhappy sufferers, tie the bandages gently round the wounds, dress, and heal them——

MRS. BERNICK. It must be a blessing to be able to see everything in such a beautiful light.

RÖRLUND. The gift is largely inborn; but it can also be acquired. The great point is to see things in the light of an earnest mission. What do *you* say, Miss Bernick? Do you not find that you have, as it were, firmer ground under your feet since you have given up your life to your school-work?

MARTHA. I scarcely know what to say. Often when I am in the school-room I wish I were far out upon the stormy sea.

RÖRLUND. Yes, yes, that is temptation, my dear Miss Bernick. You must bar the door against such an unquiet guest. The stormy sea—of course you do not mean that literally; you mean the great billowing world, where so many are wrecked. And do you really think so much of the life you hear rushing and roaring outside? Just look out into the street. There people go about in the burning sunshine, toiling and moiling over their paltry affairs. Ours, surely, is the better part, as we sit in the cool shadow, and turn our backs toward the quarter from which distraction comes.

MARTHA. Yes, I suppose you are quite right——

RÖRLUND. And in a house like this—in a good and pure home, where the Family is seen in its fairest shape—where peace and unity reign—— (*To Mrs. Bernick.*) What are you listening to, Mrs. Bernick?

Mrs. BERNICK (*who has turned toward the door of the Consul's room*). How loud they are speaking in there!

RÖRLUND. Is there anything particular going on?

Mrs. BERNICK. I don't know. I can hear there is some one with my husband.

HILMAR TÖNNESEN, *with a cigar in his mouth, comes in by the door to the right, but stops on seeing so many ladies.*

HILMAR. Oh, I beg pardon—— (*Turning to go.*)

Mrs. BERNICK. Come in, Hilmar, come in; you are not disturbing us. Do you want anything?

HILMAR. No, I only looked in in passing. Good morning, ladies. (*To Mrs. Bernick.*) Well, what's going to come of it?

MRS. BERNICK. Of what?

HILMAR. You know Bernick has called a cabinet council.

MRS. BERNICK. Indeed! What is it about?

HILMAR. Oh, it's this railway nonsense again.

MRS. RUMMEL. No! Is it possible?

MRS. BERNICK. Poor Karsten, is he to have all that worry again——

RÖRLUND. Why, what can be the meaning of this, Mr. Tønnesen? Consul Bernick made it plainly understood last year that he would have no railway here.

HILMAR. Yes, I thought so too; but I met Krap just now, and he told me that the railway question was to the fore again, and that Bernick was holding a conference with three of our capitalists.

MRS. RUMMEL. I was sure I heard Rummel's voice.

HILMAR. Yes, Mr. Rummel is there, of course, and Sandstad and Michael Vigeland—"Holy Michael," as they call him.

RÖRLUND. H'm——

HILMAR. I beg your pardon, Rector.

MRS. BERNICK. Just when everything was so nice and quiet too!

HILMAR. Well I, for my part, have no objection to their beginning their bickerings again. It's a variety at least.

RÖRLUND. I think we could get on without that sort of variety.

HILMAR. It depends upon one's constitution. Some natures crave for a Titanic struggle now and then. But provincial life, worse luck, offers little in that way, and it is not every one that can—— (*Turning over the leaves*

of RÖRLUND'S book.) *Woman as the Servant of Society*—what sort of rubbish is this?

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, Hilmar; you mustn't say that. You have surely not read the book.

HILMAR. No, and I don't intend to.

MRS. BERNICK. You don't seem well to-day.

HILMAR. No, I am not.

MRS. BERNICK. Perhaps you didn't sleep well last night.

HILMAR. No; I slept very badly. I took a walk last evening for the sake of my health. Then I went to the club, and read an account of a polar expedition. There is something invigorating in following men in their struggle with the elements.

MRS. RUMMEL. But it does not seem to have agreed with you, Mr. Tönnesen?

HILMAR. No, it didn't agree with me at all. I lay tossing all night half-asleep, and dreamt I was chased by a horrible walrus.

OLAF (*comes up the garden steps*). Have you been chased by a walrus, Uncle?

HILMAR. I dreamt it, little stupid! But do you still go playing with that ridiculous bow? Why don't you get hold of a proper gun?

OLAF. I should like to very much, but—

HILMAR. There would be some sense in a gun; it braces the nerves.

OLAF. And then I could shoot bears, Uncle—but father won't give me leave.

MRS. BERNICK. You really mustn't put such ideas into his head, Hilmar.

HILMAR. H'm—that's the rising generation nowadays! Goodness knows there's plenty of talk about pluck and

daring, but, it all ends in play after all ; no one has any faith in the discipline that lies in looking danger manfully in the face. Don't stand and point at me with your bow, stupid ; it might go off.

OLAF. No, Uncle, there's no bolt in it.

HILMAR. How do you know? There may very likely be a bolt in it. Take it away, I tell you. I'd like to know why you've never gone over to America in one of your father's ships? There you could see a buffalo-hunt or a fight with the red-skins.

MRS. BERNICK. But Hilmar——

OLAF. I should like to, very much, Uncle ; and then, perhaps, I might meet Uncle Johan and Aunt Lona.

HILMAR. H'm—don't talk nonsense.

MRS. BERNICK. Now you can go down the garden again, Olaf.

OLAF. May I go out into the street too, mother?

MRS. BERNICK. Yes, but take care not to go too far. (OLAF runs out through the garden gate.)

RÖRLUND. You should not put such notions into the child's head, Mr. Tønnesen.

HILMAR. No, of course, he's to be a mere stick-in-the mud, like so many others.

RÖRLUND. But why don't you go over yourself?

HILMAR. I? With my health? Of course no one here makes any allowance for that. But besides—one has certain duties toward the society one belongs to. There must be *one* person to hold high the banner of the ideal. Ugh, there he's shouting again!

THE LADIES. Who's shouting?

HILMAR. Oh, I don't know. They're rather loud-voiced in there, and it makes me so nervous.

MRS. RUMMEL. It is probably my husband, Mr. Tønnesen; but you must remember he is so accustomed to speak to great assemblies.

RÖRLUND. The others are not whispering either, it seems to me.

HILMAR. No, sure enough, when it's a question of the pocket, then——; everything here ends in paltry material calculations. Ugh!

MRS. BERNICK. At least that is better than formerly, when everything ended in dissipation.

MRS. LYNGE. Used things really to be so bad here?

MRS. RUMMEL. They were indeed, Mrs. Lyngé. You may think yourself lucky that you didn't live here then.

MRS. HOLT. Yes, there has certainly been a great change! When I think of the time when I was a girl——

MRS. RUMMEL. Oh, only think of fourteen or fifteen years ago—Heaven help us, what a life it was! There was both a dancing club and a music club——

MARTHA. And a dramatic club—I remember it so well.

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes, it was there your play was acted, Mr. Tønnesen.

HILMAR (*in the background*). What, what——?

RÖRLUND. Mr. Tønnesen's play?

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes; that was long before you came here, Rector. Besides, it only ran one night.

MRS. LYNGE. Was it not in that play that you told me you played the heroine, Mrs. Rummel?

MRS. RUMMEL (*glancing at the Rector*). I? I really don't remember, Mrs. Lyngé. But I remember too well all the noisy gaiety that went on among families.

MRS. HOLT. Yes, I actually know houses where two great dinner parties were given in one week.



MRS. LYNGE. And then there was a company of strolling actors, I have heard.

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes, that was the worst of all——

MRS. HOLT (*uneasily*). H'm, h'm——

MRS. RUMMEL. Oh, actors did you say? No, I remember nothing about them.

MRS. LYNGE. Why, I was told that these people played such a lot of pranks. What was the truth of the matter?

MRS. RUMMEL. Oh, it was nothing at all, Mrs. Lyngé.

MRS. HOLT. Dina, dear, hand me that piece of linen, please.

MRS. BERNICK (*at the same time*). Dina, my love, go out and ask Katrina to bring in the coffee.

MARTHA. I'll go with you, Dina. (*DINA and MARTHA go out by the farthest back-door on the left.*)

MRS. BERNICK (*rising*). And you must excuse me for a moment, ladies; I think we had better take our coffee outside. (*She goes down the garden-steps and begins arranging a table; RÖRLAND stands in the doorway talking to her. HILMAR sits outside smoking.*)

MRS. RUMMEL (*softly*). Oh, dear, Mrs. Lyngé, how you frightened me.

MRS. LYNGE. I?

MRS. HOLT. Yes; but you yourself began it, Mrs. Rummel.

MRS. RUMMEL. I? Oh, how can you say so, Mrs. Holt? Not a single word came from me.

MRS. LYNGE. But what is it all about.

MRS. RUMMEL. How could you begin to talk about——! Only think——did you not see that Dina was in the room?

MRS. LYNGE. Why, bless me! is there anything the matter with——?

MRS. HOLT. Here, in this house, too! Do you not know, then, that it was Mrs. Bernick's brother——?

MRS. LYNGE. What about him? I know nothing whatever about it, I've only just come——

MRS. RUMMEL. Then you haven't heard that——? H'm—— (*To her daughter.*) You can go down the garden for a little, Hilda.

MRS. HOLT. You go too, Netta. And be sure you behave very kindly to poor Dina when she comes. (*Miss RUMMEL and Miss HOLT go out into the garden.*)

MRS. LYNGE. Well, what about Mrs. Bernick's brother?

MRS. RUMMEL. Don't you know he was the hero of the scandal?

MRS. LYNGE. Mr. Hilmar the hero of a scandal!

MRS. RUMMEL. Good heavens, no! Hilmar is her cousin, Mrs. Lyngé. I am talking of her brother——

MRS. HOLT. The Prodigal Tönnesen——

MRS. RUMMEL. Johan was his name. He ran away to America.

MRS. HOLT. Had to run away, you understand.

MRS. LYNGE. Then the scandal was about him?

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes, it was a sort of——what shall I call it?——a sort of——with Dina's mother. Oh, I remember it as if it were yesterday. Johan Tönnesen was in old Mrs. Bernick's office: Karsten Bernick had just come home from Paris—he wasn't engaged yet——

MRS. LYNGE. Yes, but the scandal——?

MRS. RUMMEL. Well, you see, that winter Möller's comedy company was in the town.

MRS. HOLT. And in the company was Dorf, the actor, and his wife. All the young men were mad about her.

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes—Heaven knows how they could

think her pretty. But one evening Dorf came home very late——

MRS. HOLT. And quite unexpectedly.

MRS. RUMMEL. And there he found—no, really I'm ashamed to tell you.

MRS. HOLT. Why, you know, Mrs. Rummel, he found nothing, for the door was locked on the inside.

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes, that's what I say—he found the door locked. And only think! the person that was inside had to jump out at the window.

MRS. HOLT. Right from the attic window.

MRS. LYNGE. And it was Mrs. Bernick's brother?

MRS. RUMMEL. Of course it was.

MRS. LYNGE. And that was why he ran off to America?

MRS. HOLT. He had to run, you may be sure.

MRS. RUMMEL. For afterward something else was found out, that was almost as bad. Only think, he had been playing tricks with the cash-box——

MRS. HOLT. But, after all, no one knows exactly about that, Mrs. Rummel; perhaps it was a false report.

MRS. RUMMEL. Well, I really must say——! Was it not known over the whole town? For that matter, wasn't old Mrs. Bernick almost bankrupt? Rummel himself has told me that. But Heaven forbid I should say anything.

MRS. HOLT. Well, the money didn't go to Madam Dorf at any rate, for she——

MRS. LYNGE. Yes, what became of Dina's parents afterward?

MRS. RUMMEL. Oh, Dorf deserted both his wife and his child. But Madam was impudent enough to remain here a whole year. She did not dare to show her-

self in the theatre again ; but she made her living by washing and sewing——

Mrs. HOLT. And she tried to set up a dancing-school.

Mrs. RUMMEL. Of course it wouldn't do. What parents would trust their children with such a person as that? But it didn't last long ; the fine Madam wasn't accustomed to work, you see ; her chest became affected, and she died.

Mrs. LYNGE. Well, that's really a horrible story !

Mrs. RUMMEL. Yes, you may believe it has been a terrible thing for the Bernicks. It is the dark spot on the sun of their happiness, as Rummel once expressed it. You must never talk of these things in *this* house again, Mrs. Lynge.

Mrs. HOLT. And, for Heaven's sake, don't mention the step-sister either.

Mrs. LYNGE. Yes, by the bye, Mrs. Bernick has a step-sister too ?

Mrs. RUMMEL. Used to have—fortunately ; for now all relationship is over between them. Yes, she was a strange one ! Would you believe it, she cut her hair short, and went about with men's shoes on, in rainy weather.

Mrs. HOLT. And when her step-brother—the prodigal—had run away, and all the town was, of course, in commotion about him—what do you think she did ? Why, she followed him.

Mrs. RUMMEL. Yes, but think of the scandal she caused before she left, Mrs. Holt !

Mrs. HOLT. Hush, don't talk about it.

Mrs. LYNGE. What, was there a scandal about her too ?

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes ; I'll tell you all about it, Mrs. Lyngé. Bernick had just become engaged to Betty Tønnesen ; and as he was coming, with her on his arm, into her aunt's room to tell her of the engagement——

MRS. HOLT. The Tønnesens were orphans, you understand.

MRS. RUMMEL. ——Lona Hessel rose from her chair, and gave the handsome, aristocratic Karsten Bernick a ringing box on the ear !

MRS. LYNGE. Well, I never——!

MRS. HOLT. Yes, everyone knows about it.

MRS. RUMMEL. And then she packed her box and went off to America.

MRS. LYNGE. She must have been making eyes at him herself.

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes, that was just it. She imagined that he was going to propose to her as soon as he came home from Paris.

MRS. HOLT. Only think, how could she dream of such a thing !—Bernick, a polished young man of the world—a perfect gentleman—the darling of all the ladies——

MRS. RUMMEL. ——And so proper, besides, Mrs. Holt—so moral.

MRS. LYNGE. Then, what has become of this Miss Hessel in America ?

MRS. RUMMEL. Well, you see, over that there rests, as Rummel once expressed it, a veil which should scarcely be lifted.

MRS. LYNGE. What does that mean ?

MRS. RUMMEL. She has no connection with the family now, of course ; but this much is known in town, that she has sung for money in taverns over there——

MRS. HOLT. And that she has given lectures——

MRS. RUMMEL. And that she has written an insane book.

MRS. LYNGE. Is it possible——?

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes, Lona Hessel, too, is certainly a sun-spot in the Bernick's happiness. But now you know the whole story, Mrs. Lyngé. Heaven knows, I have only told it that you may take care what you say.

MRS. LYNGE. You may be quite easy on that point. But poor Dina Dorf! I am really very sorry for her!

MRS. RUMMEL. Oh, for her it was an absolute stroke of luck. Only think, if she had remained in her parents' hands! Of course we looked after her, all of us, and tried to instil good principles into her. At last Miss Bernick got leave for her to come and live here.

MRS. HOLT. But she has always been a difficult girl to deal with, after all the bad examples she has had, you know. Of course she is not like one of our own—we have to make the best of her, Mrs. Lyngé.

MRS. RUMMEL. Hush, there she comes! (*Loud.*) Yes, as you say, Dina's really a clever girl. What, are you there, Dina? We are just finishing our work here.

MRS. HOLT. Ah, how nice your coffee smells, my dear Dina——Such a cup of coffee in the forenoon——

MRS. BERNICK (*standing on the steps*). The coffee is ready, ladies. (*MARTHA and DINA have meanwhile helped the servant to bring in the coffee things. All the ladies go out and sit down; each talks more kindly than the other to DINA. After a time she comes into the room and looks for her sewing.*)

MRS. BERNICK (*out at the coffee-table*). Dina, won't you come too?

DINA. No, thanks ; I'd rather not. (*She sits down to sew. MRS. BERNICK and RÖRLUND exchange a few words : a moment after, he comes into the room.*)

RÖRLUND (*goes up to the table, as if looking for something, and says, in a low voice*). Dina.

DINA. Yes.

RÖRLUND. Why will you not come out ?

DINA. When I came in with the coffee I could see by the strange lady's looks that they had been talking about me.

RÖRLUND. And did you not see, too, how friendly she was with you ?

DINA. But that's what I can't bear.

RÖRLUND. You have a headstrong disposition, Dina.

DINA. Yes.

RÖRLUND. But why is it so ?

DINA. I was born so.

RÖRLUND. But could you not try to change it ?

DINA. No.

RÖRLUND. Why not ?

DINA (*looks up at him*). Because I belong to the "Lapsed and Lost."

RÖRLUND. Fie, Dina.

DINA. And so did my mother before me.

RÖRLUND. Who has spoken to you of such things ?

DINA. No one ; they never speak. Why do they not ? They all handle me as carefully as though I would fall to pieces, if— Oh, how I hate all this good-heartedness !

RÖRLUND. My dear Dina, I understand very well how you feel oppressed here, but—

DINA. Oh, if I could only get far away ! I could get

on well enough by myself, if only the people I lived among weren't so—so——

RÖRLUND. So what?

DINA. So proper and moral.

RÖRLUND. Now, Dina, you don't mean that.

DINA. Oh, you know very well *how* I mean it. Every day Hilda and Netta come here that I may take example by them. I can never be as well-behaved as they are, and I *won't* be. Oh! if I were only far away, I too could be good.

RÖRLUND. You *are* good, my dear Dina.

DINA. What does it matter here?

RÖRLUND. Then you are seriously thinking of going away?

DINA. I wouldn't remain here a day longer if you were not here.

RÖRLUND. Tell me, Dina, why do you like so much to be with me?

DINA. Because you teach me so much that is beautiful.

RÖRLUND. Beautiful! Do you call what I can teach you beautiful?

DINA. Yes; or rather—you teach me nothing, but when I hear you speak it makes me think of so much that is beautiful.

RÖRLUND. What do you understand, then, by a beautiful thing?

DINA. I have never thought of that.

RÖRLUND. Then think of it now. What do you understand by a beautiful thing?

DINA. A beautiful thing is something great—and far away.



RÖRLUND. H'm. My dear Dina, I sympathize with you from my inmost heart.

DINA. Is that all?

RÖRLUND. You know very well how unspeakably dear you are to me.

DINA. If I were Hilda or Netta you would not be afraid to let any one see it.

RÖRLUND. Oh, Dina, you can form no conception of the thousand considerations—— When a man is placed as a moral pillar of the society he lives in, why—he cannot be too careful. If I were only sure that people would interpret my motives rightly! But that doesn't matter; you must and shall be helped to rise. Dina, shall we make an agreement that when I come—when circumstances permit me to come—and say, Here is my hand—that you will take it and be my wife? Do you promise me that, Dina?

DINA. Yes.

RÖRLUND. Thanks! thanks! For I too—— Oh, Dina, you are so dear to me. Hush! someone is coming. Dina, for my sake—go out to the others. (*She goes out to the coffee-table. At the same moment RUMMEL, SANDSTAD, and VIGELAND come out from the Consul's office, followed by CONSUL BERNICK, who has a bundle of papers in his hand.*)

BERNICK. Then that matter is settled?

VIGELAND. Yes, in Heaven's name, so let it be.

RUMMEL. It is settled Bernick. A Norseman's word stands firm as the Doverfjeld, you know.

BERNICK. And no one is to give in or fall away, whatever opposition we may meet with?

RUMMEL. We stand and fall together, Bernick.

HILMAR (*coming up from the garden*). Excuse me ; is it not the railway that falls ?

BERNICK. On the contrary, it is to go ahead.

RUMMEL. Full steam, Mr. Tönnesen.

HILMAR (*coming forward*). Indeed !

RÖRLUND. What ?

MRS. BERNICK (*at the door*). My dear Karsten, what is the meaning—— ?

BERNICK. Oh, my dear Betty, how can it interest you ? (*To the three men.*) But now we must get the lists ready ; the sooner the better. Of course we four put our names down first. The position we occupy in society makes it our duty to do as much as we can.

SANDSTAD. No doubt, Consul.

RUMMEL. We *will* make it go, Bernick ; we're bound to.

BERNICK. Oh, yes ; I have no fear as to the result. We must work hard, each in his own circle, and if we can once point to a really lively interest in the affair among all ranks of society, it follows that the Town must also contribute its share.

MRS. BERNICK. Now, Karsten, you must really come and tell us——

BERNICK. Oh, my dear Betty, ladies don't understand these things.

HILMAR. Then you're actually going to back up the railway, after all ?

BERNICK. Yes, of course.

RÖRLUND. But last year, Consul ?

BERNICK. Last year it was a different matter altogether. Then it was a coast line that was proposed.

VIGELAND. ——Which would have been entirely superfluous, Rector ; for have we not steamboats ?

SANDSTAD. —And would have been outrageously expensive.

RUMMEL. —Yes and would actually have ruined vested interests here in the town.

BERNICK. The great objection was that it would have done no good to the great mass of the community. Therefore I opposed it, and then the inland line was adopted.

HILMAR. Yes, but that won't touch the towns about here.

BERNICK. It will touch *our* town, my dear Hilmar, for we are going to build a branch line.

HILMAR. Aha ; it is an entirely new plan, then ?

RUMMEL. Yes ; isn't it a magnificent idea, eh !

RÖRLUND. H'm—

VIGELAND. It cannot be denied that Providence seems to have ordered the lie of the land specially for a branch line.

RÖRLUND. Do you really say so, Mr. Vigeland ?

BERNICK. Yes, I must admit I too regard it as a special guidance that I happened to take a business journey this spring, and by chance came down a valley where I had never been before. It struck me like a flash of lightning that here was the very track for a branch to the town. I sent an engineer to inspect it all ; I have here the preliminary accounts and estimates ; nothing stands in our way.

MRS. BERNICK (*still standing along with the other ladies at the garden door*). But, my dear Karsten, why have you kept all this so secret ?

BERNICK. Oh, my good Betty, you wouldn't have been able to grasp the true position of affairs. Besides, J

haven't spoken of it to any living creature until to-day. But now the decisive moment has come. Now we must go to work openly, and with all our might. Ay, if I have to risk all I possess in the affair, I will make it succeed.

RUMMEL. We, too, Bernick ; you may rely on us.

RÖRLUND. Do you really expect such great results from this undertaking, gentlemen ?

BERNICK. Yes, I should think so ! What a lever it will be for our whole community ! Only think of the great tracts of forest it will bring within reach ; think of all the rich mineral seams it will allow us to work ; think of the river, with its one waterfall above the other ! What great manufactures may there not be started.

RÖRLUND. And you are not afraid that a more frequent intercourse with a depraved outer world——?

BERNICK. No—be quite at ease, Rector. Our busy little town rests nowadays, Heaven be thanked, on a sound moral foundation ; we have all helped to drain it, if I may say so ; and that we will continue to do, each in his own way. You, Rector, continue your beneficent activity in the school and in the family. We, the men of practical work, support society by spreading prosperity in as wide a circle as possible ; and our women—yes, come nearer, ladies ; I am glad that you should hear ;—our women, I say, our wives and daughters—do you work on undisturbed in your labor of well-doing, ladies, and be a help and comfort to those nearest and dearest to you, as my dear Betty and Martha are to me and Olaf——(*Looks around.*)——Why, where is Olaf to-day ?

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, now in the holidays, it's impossible to keep him at home.

BERNICK. Then he's certain to have gone down to the water again. You'll see, this will end in a misfortune.

HILMAR. Bah—a little sport with the powers of nature.

MRS. RUMMEL. How nice it is of you to be so domestic, Mr. Bernick.

BERNICK. Ah, the family is the kernel of society. A good home, honorable and trusty friends, a little close-drawn circle, where no disturbing elements cast their shadow——

KRAP *comes in from the right with letters and papers.*

KRAP. The foreign post, Consul—and a telegram from New York.

BERNICK (*taking it*). Ah, from the owners of the *Indian Girl*.

RUMMEL. Oh, the post has come? Then you must excuse me——

VIGELAND. And me too.

SANDSTAD. Good-day, Consul.

BERNICK. Good-day, good-day, gentlemen. And remember we have a meeting this afternoon at five o'clock.

THE THREE. Yes—of course—of course. (*They go out to the right.*)

BERNICK (*who has read the telegram*). Well, this is really too American! Positively shocking!

MRS. BERNICK. Why, Karsten, what is it?

BERNICK. Look here, Krap—read this!

KRAP (*reads*). "Fewest possible repairs; send *Indian Girl* without delay; good season: at worst, cargo will keep her afloat." Well, I must say——

BERNICK. The cargo keep her afloat! These gentle-

men know very well that with that cargo she'll go to the bottom like a stone, if anything happens.

RÖRLUND. This shows the state of things in these vaunted large communities.

BERNICK. You are right there—no consideration even for human life in a question of profit. (*To KRAP.*) Can the *Indian Girl* be ready for sea in four or five days?

KRAP. Yes, if Mr. Vigeland will agree to let the *Palm Tree* stand over in the meantime.

BERNICK. H'm—he won't do that. Oh, just look through the mail, please. By the way, did you not see Olaf down on the pier?

KRAP. No, Consul. (*He goes into Consul's office.*)

BERNICK (*looking again at the telegram*). These fellows never think twice about risking the lives of eighteen men——

HILMAR. Well, it's a sailor's calling to brave the elements; there must be something bracing to the nerves in having only a thin plank between you and eternity——

BERNICK. I'd like to see the shipowner amongst us that would have the conscience for such a thing! not a single one! (*Catches sight of OLAF.*) Ah, thank Heaven, there he is, safe and sound.

OLAF *with a fishing-line in his hand, comes running up the street and through the garden gate.*

OLAF (*still in the garden*). Uncle Hilmar, I've been down seeing the steamboat.

BERNICK. Have you been down on the pier again?

OLAF. No, I was only out in a boat. But just think, Uncle Hilmar, a circus company came with the steamer,

with horses and wild beasts; and there were a great many passengers besides.

MRS. RUMMEL. Oh! are we really to have a circus?

RÖRLUND. We? Really I should hope not.

MRS. RUMMEL. No, of course not *we*, but——

DINA. I should like to see the horsemanship.

OLAF. And I, too.

HILMAR. You're a little blockhead. What is there to see? All sham. Now it would be something worth while to see the gaucho sweeping over the Pampas on his snorting mustang. But, hang it! here in these little towns——

OLAF (*pulling Martha's dress*). Aunt Martha, look, look—there they come.

MRS. HOLT. Yes, indeed, here we have them.

MRS. LYNGE. Oh, what horrid people! (*Many travellers and a whole crowd of townspeople come up the street.*)

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes, they are a regular set of mountebanks. Just look at that one in the gray dress, Mrs. Holt; the one with the knapsack on her back.

MRS. HOLT. Yes, see, she has slung it on the handle of her parasol. Of course it is the manager's wife.

MRS. RUMMEL. Oh, and there is the manager himself, the one with the beard. Well, he looks a regular pirate. Don't look at him, Hilda!

MRS. HOLT. Nor you either, Netta.

OLAF. Oh, mother, the manager is bowing to us.

BERNICK. What?

MRS. BERNICK. What do you say, child?

MRS. RUMMEL. Yes, I declare, and there's the woman nodding too!

BERNICK. Come, this is really too much!

MARTHA (*with an involuntary cry*). Ah——!

MRS. BERNICK. What is it, Martha?

MARTHA. Oh, no, nothing—only I thought——

OLAF (*shricks with delight*). Look, there come the others, with the horses and wild beasts! And there are the Americans too! All the sailors from the *Indian Girl*—— (“*Yankee Doodle*” is heard, played on a clarinet and drum.)

HILMAR (*stopping his ears*). Ugh, ugh, ugh!

RÖRLUND. I think we should retire for a little, ladies. This is not a scene for us. Let us go to our work again.

MRS. BERNICK. Perhaps we should draw the curtains?

RÖRLUND. Yes, that is just what I was thinking. (*The ladies take their places at the table. RÖRLUND shuts the garden door and draws the curtain over it and over the windows: it becomes half dark in the room.*)

OLAF (*peeping out*). Mother, the manager’s wife is standing at the fountain washing her face!

MRS. BERNICK. What, in the middle of the marketplace!

MRS. RUMMEL. And in broad daylight!

HILMAR. Well, if I were travelling in the desert and came upon a spring, I should never hesitate to—— Ugh, that abominable clarinet!

RÖRLUND. It seems to me the police should interfere.

BERNICK. Oh, no; one mustn’t be too hard upon foreigners; these people haven’t the deep-rooted sense of propriety that keeps us within the right limits. Let them do as they please, it doesn’t hurt us. All this disorderliness, setting itself up against propriety and good manners, is, fortunately, quite out of touch with our society, if I may say so—— What is this?



A STRANGE LADY *suddenly enters by the door on the right.*

THE LADIES (*frightened and speaking low*). The circus woman! The manager's wife!

MRS. BERNICK. Good heavens! what does this mean?

MARTHA (*starts up*). Ah!

THE LADY. Good-day, my dear Betty! Good-day, Martha! Good-day, brother-in-law!

MRS. BERNICK (*with a shriek*). Lona——!

BERNICK (*starts back a step*). As I live——!

MRS. HOLT. Why, mercy on us——!

MRS. RUMMEL. It can't be possible——!

HILMAR. What! Ugh!

MRS. BERNICK. Lona! Is it really——!

LONA. Really me? Yes, indeed it is. You may fall on my neck and embrace me, for that matter.

HILMAR. Ugh! ugh!

MRS. BERNICK. And you come here as——?

BERNICK. You are actually going to appear——?

LONA. Appear? How appear?

BERNICK. I mean—in the circus?

LONA. Ha! ha! ha! What nonsense, brother-in-law. Do you think I belong to the circus? No; it's true I've done all sorts of things, and made a fool of myself in many ways——

MRS. RUMMEL. H'm——!

LONA. But I've never learned to play tricks on horse-back——

BERNICK. Then you're not——?

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, thank goodness!

LONA. No, indeed; we came like other respectable people—second-class, it's true, but we're used to that.

MRS. BERNICK. *We*, you say?

BERNICK (*striding forward*). What *we*?

LONA. Why, my boy and I, of course.

THE LADIES (*with a cry*). Your boy!

HILMAR. What?

RÖRLUND. Well, I must say——

MRS. BERNICK. Why, what do you mean, Lona?

LONA. Of course I mean John; I've no other boy but John, that I know of—or Johan, as you call him.

MRS. BERNICK. Johan——!

MRS. RUMMEL (*aside to Mrs. Lyngé*). The prodigal brother!

BERNICK (*slowly*). Is Johan with you?

LONA. Of course, of course; I wouldn't travel without him. But you're all looking so dismal—and sitting here in this twilight, sewing at something white? There hasn't been a death in the family?

RÖRLUND. You find yourself, Miss Hessel, in the society for the Lapsed and Lost.

LONA (*half to herself*). What do you say? These nice-looking, well-behaved ladies, can they be——?

MRS. RUMMEL. Oh, this is too much!

LONA. Oh, I understand, I understand! Why, good gracious, that's Mrs. Rummel! And there sits Mrs. Holt, too! Well, we three haven't grown younger since we met last. But listen now, good people; let the Lapsed and Lost wait for one day; they'll be none the worse for it. A joyful occasion like this——

RÖRLUND. A return home is not always a joyful occasion!

LONA. Indeed? How do you read your Bible, Pastor?

RÖRLUND. I am not a clergyman.

LONA. Oh, then you will be for certain—— But, fie, fie—this moral linen here smells so tainted—just like a shroud. I am accustomed to the air of the prairies now, I can tell you.

BERNICK (*wiping his forehead*). Yes, it is really rather oppressive in here.

LONA. Wait a little, wait a little—we'll soon rise from the sepulchre (*draws back the curtains*). We must have broad daylight here when my boy comes. Yes—then you'll see a boy that has washed himself——

HILMAR. Ugh!

LONA (*opens the door and the windows*). I mean when he has washed himself—up at the hotel—for on board the steamer you get as dirty as a pig.

HILMAR. Ugh, ugh!

LONA. Ugh? Why I declare it is—— (*Points to HILMAR, and asks the others.*) Does he still loaf about saying “ugh” to everything?

HILMAR. I don't loaf; I stop here for the sake of my health.

RÖRLUND. H'm. Ladies, I don't think that——

LONA (*catches sight of OLAF*). Is he yours, Betty? Give me your fist, my boy—or are you afraid of your ugly old aunt?

RÖRLUND (*putting his book under his arm*). I don't think, ladies, that we are quite in the mood for doing more work to-day. But we shall meet again to-morrow?

LONA (*as the visitors rise to go*). Yes, let us—I'll be here, you may depend.

RÖRLUND. You? Allow me, Miss Hessel, to ask what *you* will do in our society?

LONA. I will let in fresh air, Pastor.

## ACT II.

[*The garden room in CONSUL BERNICK'S house.*]

[MRS. BERNICK *is sitting alone at the work-table, sewing.*  
*In a little while CONSUL BERNICK enters from the right, with his hat and gloves on, and a stick in his hand.*]

MRS. BERNICK. Are you home already, Karsten?

BERNICK. Yes. I have an appointment here.

MRS. BERNICK (*sighing*). Oh, yes, I suppose Johan will be down here again.

BERNICK. No, it's with one of my men. (*Takes off his hat.*) Where are all the ladies to-day?

MRS. BERNICK. Mrs. Rummel and Hilda hadn't time to come.

BERNICK. Ah! Sent excuses?

MRS. BERNICK. Yes; they had so much to do at home.

BERNICK. Of course, of course. And the others aren't coming either, I suppose.

MRS. BERNICK. No, something has come in the way with them too.

BERNICK. I was sure it would. Where is Olaf?

MRS. BERNICK. I allowed him to go out a little with Dina.

BERNICK. H'm! Dina, the thoughtless hussy. How could she go and at once strike up a friendship with Johan——!

MRS. BERNICK. Why, my dear Karsten, Dina has no idea——

BERNICK. Well then, Johan at least should have had tact enough not to take any notice of her. I could see Vigeland's expressive glances.

MRS. BERNICK (*dropping her work into her lap*). Karsten, can you understand what has brought them home ?

BERNICK. H'm ; -he has a farm over there, which I suppose isn't getting on very well ; she hinted yesterday that they had to travel second-class——

MRS. BERNICK. Yes, I'm afraid it must be something of that sort. But that she should have come with him ! She ! after the terrible way she insulted you—— !

BERNICK. Oh, don't think of these old stories.

MRS. BERNICK. How can I think of anything else ? He's my own brother, you know ; and yet it's not for his sake, but all the unpleasantness it will bring upon you. Karsten, I am so dreadfully afraid that——

BERNICK. What are you afraid of ?

MRS. BERNICK. Might they not think of arresting him for that money your mother lost ?

BERNICK. What nonsense ! Who can prove that she lost the money ?

MRS. BERNICK. Unfortunately the whole town knows it, and you said yourself——

BERNICK. I said nothing. The town knows nothing about these affairs ; it was a mere rumor.

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, how noble you are, Karsten !

BERNICK. Forget these old stories, I say. You don't know how you torture me by raking all this up again. (*He walks up and down the room ; then he pitches his stick away from him.*) That they should come home

just at this time, when I depend so much on unmixed good-feeling, both in the press and in the town. There will be paragraphs in the papers all over the country-side. Whether I receive them well or ill, my action will be discussed, my motives misinterpreted. They'll rip up all these old stories—just as you do. In a community like ours—— (*Throws down his gloves upon the table.*) And I haven't a person here I can confide in, or that can give me any support.

MRS. BERNICK. No one at all, Karsten ?

BERNICK. No ; you know I haven't. That they should come upon me just at this moment ! There's no doubt they'll cause a scandal in one way or another—especially she. It is a perfect calamity to have such people in one's family.

MRS. BERNICK. Well, it's not my fault that——

BERNICK. What's not your fault ? That you are related to them ? No ; that's true enough.

MRS. BERNICK. And it wasn't I that asked them to come home.

BERNICK. Aha ! now we have it. "*I didn't ask them to come home ; I didn't write for them ; I didn't drag them home by the hair of their heads.*" Oh, I know the whole story off by heart.

MRS. BERNICK (*bursting into tears*). Oh, why are you so unkind ?

BERNICK. Yes, that's right ; set to crying, so that the town may have that to talk about, too. Stop this nonsense, Betty. You'd better sit outside there ; someone might come in. Perhaps you want people to see madam with red eyes ? Yes, it would be nice if it got abroad among people that—— Ah ! I hear someone in the

lobby. (*A knock.*) Come in. (MRS. BERNICK goes out to the garden steps with her work.)

AUNE comes in from the right.

AUNE. Good-day, Consul!

BERNICK. Good-day. Well, I suppose you can guess what I want with you?

AUNE. Your clerk told me yesterday that you were not pleased with——

BERNICK. I am altogether displeased with the way things go on at the yard, Aune. You are not getting on at all with the repairs. The *Palm Tree* should have been at sea long ago. Mr. Vigeland comes bothering me about it every day. He is a troublesome man to have for a partner.

AUNE. The *Palm Tree* can go to sea the day after to-morrow.

BERNICK. At last! But the American, the *Indian Girl*, that's been lying here five weeks, and——

AUNE. The American? I understood that we were first to get on as fast as possible with your own ship.

BERNICK. I have given you no reason for such an idea. You should have made all possible progress with the American too; but you have done nothing.

AUNE. The vessel's bottom is as rotten as matchwood, Consul; the more we patch at it the worse it gets.

BERNICK. That's not the true reason. Krap has told me the whole truth. You don't understand how to work with the new machines—or rather, you won't work with them.

AUNE. Consul Bernick, I am getting on for sixty;

from my boyhood I have been accustomed to the old way of work----

BERNICK. We can't get on with it nowadays. You mustn't think, Aune, that it's for the sake of mere profit ; luckily I don't require that ; but I must take into consideration the community I live in, and the house of business of which I am the head. It is from me that that progress must come, or it will never come at all.

AUNE. I have no objection to progress, Consul.

BERNICK. No, for your own narrow circle, for the working-class. Oh, I know well enough the agitations you get up ; you make speeches ; you stir people up ; but when a tangible piece of progress offers itself, as in the case of the machines, you will have nothing to do with it ; you are afraid.

AUNE. Yes, I am really afraid, Consul ; I am afraid for the many whom the machines will rob of their daily bread. You often talk of care for the community, Consul, but it seems to me that the community, too, has its duties. How dare science and capital set all this new mechanism to work before the community has educated a generation that can use it ?

BERNICK. You read and think too much, Aune ; it does you no good ; it is that which makes you dissatisfied with your position.

AUNE. It is not that, Consul ; but I cannot bear to see one good workman after another sent away to starvation for the sake of these machines.

BERNICK. H'm ; when printing was discovered, many copyists had to starve.

AUNE. Would you have admired the art so much, Consul, if you had then been a copyist ?



BERNICK. I didn't send for you to argue with you. I sent for you to tell you that the *Indian Girl* must be ready to sail the day after to-morrow.

AUNE. Why, Consul—

BERNICK. The day after to-morrow, do you hear; at the same time as our own ship; not an hour later. I have my reasons for hurrying on the affair. Have you read this morning's paper? Ah!—then you know that the Americans have been making disturbances again. The shameless pack put the whole town topsy-turvy. Not a night passes without fights in the taverns or on the street; not to speak of other abominations.

AUNE. Yes, they're certainly a bad lot.

BERNICK. And who gets the blame for all this disturbance? It is I—yes I, that suffer for it. These newspaper scribblers are always covertly carping at us for giving our whole attention to the *Palm Tree*. And I, whose mission it is to be an example to my fellow-citizens, must have such things thrown in my teeth! I cannot bear it. It won't do for me to have my name bespattered in this way.

AUNE. Oh, your name is so good it can bear more than that.

BERNICK. Not just now; precisely at this moment I need all the respect and good-will of my fellow-citizens. I have a great undertaking on hand, as you have probably heard; but if evil-disposed persons succeed in shaking people's unqualified confidence in me, it may involve me in the greatest difficulties. So I must silence these carping and spiteful scribblers at any price, and that is why I give you till the day after to-morrow.

AUNE. You might as well give me till this afternoon, Consul Bernick.

BERNICK. You mean that I'm demanding impossibilities?

AUNE. Yes, with the working staff we have now——

BERNICK. Oh, very well;—then we must look about us elsewhere.

AUNE. Will you really dismiss still more of the old workmen?

BERNICK. No, that's not what I'm thinking of.

AUNE. For I am sure if you did so there would be an outcry both in the town and in the newspapers.

BERNICK. Very possibly; therefore I won't do it. But if the *Indian Girl* isn't cleared the day after to-morrow I shall dismiss you.

AUNE (*with a start*). Me! (*Laughing*.) Oh, you are joking now, Consul.

BERNICK. I don't advise you to trust to that.

AUNE. You can think of dismissing me! Me, whose father and grandfather worked in the shipyard all their lives, and myself too——

BERNICK. Who forces me to it?

AUNE. You ask impossibilities, Consul?

BERNICK. Oh, where there's a will there's a way. Yes or no; answer me decidedly, or I dismiss you on the spot.

AUNE (*coming nearer*). Consul Bernick, have you rightly reflected what it is to dismiss an old workman? You say he can look out for something else? Oh, yes, I dare say he can—but is that all? If you could only look into the house of a dismissed workman on the evening when he comes home and brings his tool-chest with him.

BERNICK. Do you think I am glad to part with you? Have I not always been a good master to you?

AUNE. So much the worse, Consul. Just on that account my people at home will not blame you. They will not say anything to me, for they dare not; but they will look at me when I am not noticing, and think it must surely have been my fault. You see, that—that is what I cannot bear. Poor man as I am, I have always been the first in my own house. My humble home is itself a little community, Consul Bernick. That little community I have been able to support and hold together because my wife believed in me, my children believed in me. And now the whole thing falls to pieces.

BERNICK. Well, if it can't be otherwise, the less must fall before the greater; the part must in Heaven's name be sacrificed to the whole. I can give you no other answer; and you will find things are so ordered here in the world. But you are an obstinate man, Aune! You stand against me, not because you can't do otherwise, but because you *will* not prove the superiority of machinery to manual labor.

AUNE. And you hold fast to this, Consul, because you know that if you send me away you will at least have shown the papers your goodwill.

BERNICK. And if it were so? You hear what a dilemma I am in—I must either have the whole press down upon me, or I must get it well-disposed toward me at the moment when I am working for a great and beneficent cause. What follows? Can I possibly act otherwise? I tell you the question is whether your home is to be kept up and hundreds of new homes to be kept down,

hundreds of homes which will never be founded, will never have a smoking hearthstone, if I do not succeed in what I am now working for. So I give you your choice.

AUNE. Well, if that is how it stands, I have nothing more to say.

BERNICK. H'm—my dear Aune, I am truly sorry that we must part.

AUNE. We will *not* part, Consul Bernick.

BERNICK. What?

AUNE. Even a common man has his rights here in the world.

BERNICK. Of course, of course. Then you can promise——?

AUNE. The *Indian Girl* shall be cleared the day after to-morrow. (*He bows and goes out to the right.*)

BERNICK. Aha, I've got over his stiff-necked notions. I take that as a good omen——

HILMAR TÖNNESEN, *with a cigar in his mouth, comes through the garden gate.*

HILMAR (*on the garden steps*). Good-day, Betty! Good-day, Bernick!

MRS. BERNICK. Good-day.

HILMAR. Oh, you've been crying, I see. Then you have heard all?

MRS. BERNICK. All what?

HILMAR. That the scandal is in full swing! Ugh!

BERNICK. What do you mean?

HILMAR (*coming into the room*). Why, that the two Americans are going about the streets, showing themselves off in company with Dina Dorf.

MRS. BERNICK (*also coming in*). Oh, Hilmar, can it be possible——?

HILMAR. Yes, unfortunately, it's quite true. Lona had even the want of tact to call out to *me*; but of course I pretended not hear her.

BERNICK. And of course all of this hasn't been going on unnoticed.

HILMAR. No, you may be sure it hasn't. People stopped and looked at them. It ran like wildfire over the town—like a fire on the western prairies. People stood at the windows of all the houses waiting for the procession to pass, head to head behind the curtains. Ugh! You must excuse me, Betty; I say, ugh! for it makes me so nervous. If this goes on I shall have to think of taking a trip somewhere, pretty far off.

MRS. BERNICK. But you should have spoken to him, and showed him——

HILMAR. In the public street? No, I beg to be excused. The idea that that fellow should dare to show himself here in town! Well, we'll see if the press doesn't put a stopper on him. I beg your pardon, Betty, but——

BERNICK. The press, you say? Have you heard any hints of that sort?

HILMAR. Yes, a slight hint. When I left here last night I strolled up to the club for the sake of my health. I could see from the sudden silence when I came in that the two Americans had been on the *tapis*. And then in came that impertinent Editor Hammer, and congratulated me, before everybody, upon my rich cousin's return.

BERNICK. Rich——?

HILMAR. Yes, that was what he said. I measured him from top to toe with the scorn he deserves, and gave him to understand that I knew nothing of Johan Tønnesen being rich. "Indeed," says he; "that's strange. In America people generally get on when they've something to start with, and your cousin didn't go over empty-handed."

BERNICK. H'm! Be so good as to——

MRS. BERNICK (*anxiously*). There, you see, Karsten.

HILMAR. Well, at any rate, I've had a sleepless night on the fellow's account, and there he is going about the streets, looking as if he had nothing to be ashamed of. Why wasn't he finished at once? It is intolerable how tough some people are.

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, Hilmar, what are you saying?

HILMAR. Oh, I'm not saying anything. But here he escapes safe and sound from railway accidents, and fights with Californian bears and Blackfoot Indians; why, he's not even scalped—— Ugh! here they are.

BERNICK (*looks down the street*). Olaf is with them, too.

HILMAR. Yes, of course; they must remind people that they belong to the first family in the town. Look, look, there come all the loafers out from the druggist's shop to stare at them and make remarks. Really, this is too much for my nerves; how a man, under such circumstances, is to hold high the banner of the ideal——

BERNICK. They are coming straight here. Listen, Betty; it is my decided wish that you should be as friendly as possible to them.

MRS. BERNICK. Will you allow me, Karsten?

BERNICK. Of course, of course; and you, too, Hilmar.

They surely won't remain here very long; and when we are alone with them—no innuendoes—we must not hurt their feelings in any way.

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, Karsten, how noble you are!

BERNICK. Now, now, don't talk of that.

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, but you must let me thank you, and forgive me for being so hasty. You had every reason to——

BERNICK. Don't talk of it, don't talk of it, I say.

HILMAR. Ugh!

JOHAN TÖNNESEN and DINA, and after them LONA and OLAF, come through the garden.

LONA. Good-day, good-day, my dear people.

JOHAN. We have been out looking all about the old place, Karsten.

BERNICK. Yes, so I hear. Greatly changed, isn't it?

LONA. Consul Bernick's great and good works everywhere. We have been up in the gardens you have presented to the town——

BERNICK. Oh, there!

LONA. "Karsten Bernick's Gift," as the inscription over the entrance says. Yes, it's all your work here.

JOHAN. And such magnificent ships as you have got! I met my old school-fellow, the captain of the *Palm Tree*.

LONA. Yes, and you've built a new school-house, too. And they owe both the gas and the water-works to you, I hear.

BERNICK. Oh, one must work for the community one lives in.

LONA. Well, it's good of you, brother-in-law; but it is nice, too, to see how people appreciate you. I don't

think I am vain, but I could not help reminding one or two of the people we talked to that we belong to the family.

HILMAR. Ugh——!

LONA. Do you say "Ugh!" to that?

HILMAR. No, I said "H'm"——

LONA. Oh, was that all, poor fellow. But you are quite alone here to-day!

MRS. BERNICK. Yes, to-day we are quite alone.

LONA. By the bye, we met one or two of the Lapsed and Lost up in the market-place; they seemed to be very busy. But we've never had a proper talk yet; yesterday we had the three pioneers of progress here, and the pastor too——

HILMAR. The Rector.

LONA. I call him the Pastor. But now——what do you think of my work for these fifteen years? Hasn't he grown a fine boy? Who would recognize the madcap that ran away from home.

HILMAR. H'm——!

JOHAN. Oh, Lona, don't boast too much.

LONA. I don't care, I'm really proud of it. Well, well, it's the only thing I've done in the world, but it gives me a sort of right to exist. Yes, Johan, when I think how we two began life over there with only our four paws——

HILMAR. Hands.

LENA. I say paws, for they were as dirty as——

HILMAR. Ugh!

LONA. And empty, too.

HILMAR. Empty. Well I must say——

LONA. What must you say?



BERNICK. H'm !

HILMAR. I must say—ugh ! (*Goes out upon the garden stair.*)

LONA. What's wrong with the man ?

BERNICK. Oh, never mind him ; he's rather nervous just now. But wouldn't you like to look round the garden a little ? You haven't been down there yet, and I happen to have an hour to spare.

LONA. Yes, I should like it very much ; you may believe my thoughts have often been with you all here in the garden.

MRS. BERNICK. There have been great changes there, too, as you will see. (*The CONSUL, his WIFE, and LONA go down the garden, where they are now and then visible during the following scene.*)

OLAF (*at the garden door*). Uncle Hilmar, do you know what Uncle John asked me ? He asked if I'd like to go with him to America.

HILMAR. *You*, you little good-for-nothing, that go about tied to your mother's apron-strings.

OLAF. Yes, but I won't be so any more. You shall see, when I'm big——

HILMAR. Oh, rubbish ; you don't really want to be made a man of—— (*They go down the garden together.*)

JOHAN (*to DINA, who has taken off her hat, and stands at the door to the right shaking the dust from her dress*). The walk has made you very warm.

DINA. Yes ; it was splendid. I have never had such a nice walk before.

JOHAN. Perhaps you don't often go walks in the morning.

DINA. Oh, yes ; but only with Olaf.

JOHAN. Ah!—Perhaps you would like to go down the garden?

DINA. No; I would rather remain here.

JOHAN. And I too. Then it's settled that we take a walk every morning.

DINA. No, Mr. Tönnesen, you must not do that.

JOHAN. Why should I not? You know you promised.

DINA. Yes, but on thinking over it, I—— You must not go out with me.

JOHAN. Why not?

DINA. Ah, you're a stranger here; you can't understand it; but I must tell you——

JOHAN. Well?

DINA. No, I would rather not speak about it.

JOHAN. Oh, yes—you may speak to me of whatever you like.

DINA. Then I must tell you that I am not like the other girls here; there is something—something about me. That's why you mustn't walk with me.

JOHAN. But I can't understand this at all. You haven't done anything wrong?

DINA. No, not I, but——; no, I won't say any more about it. You're sure to hear it from the others.

JOHAN. H'm——.

DINA. But there was something else I wanted to ask you about.

JOHAN. And what was that?

DINA. Is it really so easy to lead a life that is worth something over in America?

JOHAN. Well, it isn't always *easy*; one has often to suffer much and work hard in the beginning.

DINA. I would willingly do that—

JOHAN. You?

DINA. I can work well enough; I am strong and healthy, and Aunt Martha has taught me a great deal.

JOHAN. Then, hang it all, why not come with us?

DINA. Oh, now you're only joking; you said the same to Olaf too. But I wanted to know, too, if people over there are very—very moral, you know?

JOHAN. Moral?

DINA. Yes, I mean, are they so—so proper and well-behaved as they are here?

JOHAN. Well, at any rate, they're not so bad as people here think. Don't be at all afraid of that.

DINA. You don't understand me. What I want is just that they should not be so very proper and moral.

JOHAN. Indeed? What would you have them then?

DINA. I would have them natural.

JOHAN. Well, that's perhaps just what they are.

DINA. Then that would be the place for me.

JOHAN. Yes, indeed, it would; so you must come with us.

DINA. No, I would not go with you; I would have to go alone. Oh, I should get on; I should soon be fit for something—

BERNICK (*at the foot of the garden stair with the two ladies*). Stay here, stay here; I will fetch it, my dear Betty. You might easily catch cold. (*Comes into the room and looks for his wife's shawl.*)

MRS. BERNICK (*from the garden*). You must come too, Johan; we are going down to the grotto.

BERNICK. No, Johan must remain here just now. Here, Dina; take my wife's shawl and go with them. Johan

will remain here with me, my dear Betty. I want to ask him about things in America.

Mrs. BERNICK. Very well ; then come after us ; you know where to find us. (Mrs. BERNICK, LONA, and DINA go down through the garden to the left.)

BERNICK (*looks out after them for a moment, goes and shuts the farthest back door on the left, then goes up to JOHAN, seizes both hands, shakes them, and presses them warmly.*) Johan, now we are alone ; you must give me leave to thank you.

JOHAN. Oh, nonsense !

BERNICK. My house and home, my domestic happiness, my whole position in society—all these I owe to you.

JOHAN. Well, I'm glad of it, my dear Karsten ; so some good came of that foolish story after all.

BERNICK (*shaking his hands again*). Thanks, thanks, all the same. Not one in ten thousand would have done what you then did for me.

JOHAN. Oh, nonsense ! Were we not both of us young and thoughtless ? One of us had to take the blame upon him.

BERNICK. But to whom did it lie nearer than to the guilty one ?

JOHAN. Stop ! *Then* it lay nearer to the innocent one. I was alone, free, an orphan ; it was a positive blessing to me to escape from the grind of the office. You, on the other hand, had your old mother in life, and, besides, you had just become secretly engaged to Betty, and she was very fond of you. What would have become of her if she had come to know—— ?

BERNICK. True, true, true ; but——

JOHAN. And was it not just for Betty's sake that you

broke off that entanglement with Madame Dorf? It was for the very purpose of putting an end to it that you were up at her house that night——

BERNICK. Yes, the fatal night when that drunken beast came home. Yes, Johan, it was for Betty's sake; but yet, that you should turn appearances against yourself and go away——

JOHAN. Have no scruples, my dear Karsten. We agreed that it should be so; you had to be saved, and you were my friend. I can tell you I was proud of that friendship. Here was I, plodding along like a poor stay-at-home, when you came back like a very prince from your great foreign tour; you had been in both London and Paris. Then you chose me for your bosom friend, though I was four years younger than you. Well, that was because you were making love to Betty; now I understand it well enough. But how proud I was of it then! And who wouldn't have been proud? Who would not willingly have sacrificed himself for you, especially when it was only a matter of a month's town-talk, and one had only to run away out into the wide world.

BERNICK. H'm! My dear Johan, I must tell you openly that the story is not so entirely forgotten yet.

JOHAN. Is it not? Well, what does it matter to me when once I am back again at my farm?

BERNICK. Then you are going back again?

JOHAN. Of course.

BERNICK. But not so very soon, I hope?

JOHAN. As soon as possible. It was only to please Lona that I came over at all.

BERNICK. Indeed; how so?

JOHAN. Well, you see, Lona isn't young now, and for some time past a sort of home-sickness has come over her, though she would never admit it. (*Smiling.*) She dared not leave behind her an irresponsible being like me, who, before I was out of my teens, had been mixed up in——

BERNICK. And then?

JOHAN. Well, Karsten, now I must make a confession I am really ashamed of.

BERNICK. You haven't told her the whole truth?

JOHAN. Yes, I have. It was wrong of me, but I couldn't help it. You have no conception what Lona has been to me. You could never endure her; but to me she has been a mother. In the first few years over there, when we were desperately poor, oh, how she worked; and when I had a long illness, and could not earn anything, and could not keep her from doing it, she took to singing songs in the cafés, gave lectures that people laughed at, wrote a book she has both laughed and cried over since, and all to keep my soul and body together. Last winter, when I saw her pining away, she who had toiled and moiled for me, could I sit still and look on? No, I couldn't, Karsten. I said, "Go, go, Lona, don't be afraid for me; I am not such a scapegrace as you think." And then——then I told her the whole.

BERNICK. And how did she take it?

JOHAN. Oh, she said what was quite true, that as I was innocent I could have no objection to taking a trip over here myself. But you needn't be afraid; Lona will say nothing, and I'll take better care of my own tongue another time.

BERNICK. Yes, yes, I am sure you will.

JOHAN. Here's my hand upon it. And now don't let us talk any more of that old story; fortunately it is the only escapade either you or I have been mixed up in, I hope. And now I mean thoroughly to enjoy the few days I shall have here. You can't think what a splendid walk we have had this forenoon. Who would have thought that little baggage that ran about here and played angels in the theatre——! But tell me what became of her parents afterward?

BERNICK. Oh, there's nothing more to tell than what I wrote you immediately after you went away. You got the two letters, of course?

JOHAN. Of course, of course; I have them both. The drunken scoundrel left her?

BERNICK. And was afterward killed in a drinking-bout.

JOHAN. And she too died soon after? But I suppose you did all you could for her without exciting attention.

BERNICK. She was proud; she betrayed nothing, but she would accept nothing.

JOHAN. Well, at any rate, it was right of you to take Dina into your house.

BERNICK. Oh, yes—— However, it was really Martha that brought that about.

JOHAN. Oh, it was Martha? By the bye, where is Martha to-day?

BERNICK. Why, as for her, when she's not busy at the school, she has her sick people to attend to.

JOHAN. Then it was Martha that looked after her?

BERNICK. Yes, Martha always had a sort of weakness

for education. That's why she accepted a place in the communal school. It was very foolish of her.

JOHAN. She certainly looked very weary yesterday ; I should not think her health would stand it.

BERNICK. Oh, so far as her health goes, I suppose it's all right. But it is unpleasant for me. It looks as if I, her brother, were not willing to maintain her.

JOHAN. Maintain her ? I thought she had enough of her own to——

BERNICK. Not a halfpenny. I daresay you remember what difficulties my mother was in when you went away. She got on for some time with my help ; but, of course, in the long run that would not do for me. So I got myself taken into partnership ; but even then things did not go well. At last I had to take over the whole affair, and when we made up our accounts, it appeared that there was scarcely anything left to my mother's share ; and as she died shortly afterward, Martha, of course, was left with nothing.

JOHAN. Poor Martha !

BERNICK. Poor ! Why so ? You don't suppose I let her want for anything ? Oh, no, I think I may say I am a good brother. Of course she lives with us and eats at our table ; her salary is quite enough for her dress, and —what can a single woman want more ?

JOHAN. H'm ; that's not the way we think in America.

BERNICK. No, I dare say not ; there are too many agitators at work over there. But here, in our little circle, where, thank Heaven, corruption has not yet managed to creep in, here women are content to occupy a modest and becoming position. For the rest, it is Martha's own



fault ; she could have been provided for long ago if she had cared to.

JOHAN. You mean she could have married ?

BERNICK. Yes, and married very well too ; she has had several good offers ; it's strange enough—a woman without money, no longer young, and, besides, quite insignificant.

JOHAN. Insignificant ?

BERNICK. Oh, I don't blame her at all for it. Indeed I wouldn't have her otherwise. You know, in a large house like ours, it is always well to have some steady-going person like her whom one can put to anything that may turn up.

JOHAN. Yes, but she herself—— ?

BERNICK. She herself ? why of course she has enough to interest herself in ; Betty, and Olaf, and me, you know. People should not think of themselves first, and women least of all. We have each our community, great or small, to support and work for. I do so, at any rate. (*Pointing to KRAP, who enters from the right.*) See, here you have a proof. Do you think it is my own business I am occupied with ? By no means. (*Quickly to KRAP.*) Well ?

KRAP (*whispers, showing him a bundle of papers*). All the arrangements for the purchase are complete.

BERNICK. Capital ! first-rate !—Oh, Johan, you must excuse me for a moment. (*Low, and with a pressure of the hand.*) Thanks, thanks, Johan, and be sure that anything I can do to serve you—you understand—Come, Mr. Krap ! (*They go into the Consul's office.*)

JOHAN (*looks after him for some time*). H'm—— ! (*He turns to go down the garden. At the same moment MAR-*

MARtha enters from the right with a little basket on her arm.)  
Ah, Martha?

MARThA. Oh—Johan—is it you?

JOHAN. Have you been out so early, too?

MARThA. Yes. Wait a little; the others will be here soon. (*Turns to go out to the left.*)

JOHAN. I say, Martha, why are you always in such a hurry?

MARThA. I?

JOHAN. Yesterday you kept out of the way so that I couldn't get a word with you, and to-day—

MARThA. Yes, but—

JOHAN. Before, we were always together, we two old play-fellows.

MARThA. Ah, Johan, that is many, many years ago.

JOHAN. Why, bless me, it's fifteen years ago, neither more nor less. Perhaps you think I have changed a great deal?

MARThA. You? Oh, yes, you too, although—

JOHAN. What do you mean?

MARThA. Oh, nothing.

JOHAN. You don't seem overjoyed to see me again.

MARThA. I have waited so long, Johan—too long.

JOHAN. Waited? For me to come?

MARThA. Yes.

JOHAN. And why did you think I would come?

MARThA. To expiate where you had sinned.

JOHAN. I?

MARThA. Have you forgotten that a woman died in shame and need for your sake? Have you forgotten that by your fault a young girl's best years have been embittered?

JOHAN. And I must hear this from you? Martha, has your brother never——?

MARTHA. What of him?

JOHAN. Has he never——; oh, I mean has he never even said a word in my defence?

MARTHA. Ah, Johan, you know Karsten's strict principles.

JOHAN. H'm—of course, of course—yes, I know my old friend Karsten's strict principles. But this is——! Well, well—I have just been talking to him. It seems to me he has changed a good deal.

MARTHA. How can you say so? Karsten has always been an excellent man.

JOHAN. That wasn't exactly what I meant; but let that pass. H'm; now I understand the light you have seen me in; it is the prodigal's return that you have been waiting for.

MARTHA. Listen, Johan, and I shall tell you in what light I have seen you. (*Points down to the garden*) Do you see that girl playing in the grass with Olaf? That is Dina. Do you remember that confused letter you wrote me when you went away? You told me to believe in you. I have believed in you, Johan. All the bad things that there were rumors of afterward must have been done in desperation, without thought, without purpose——

JOHAN. What do you mean?

MARTHA. Oh, you understand me well enough; no more of that. But you had to go away—to begin afresh—a new life. See, Johan, I have stood in your place here, I, your old playfellow. The duties you forgot, or could not look to, I performed for you. I tell you this

so that you may not have this to reproach yourself with. I have been a mother to that much-wronged child, have brought her up as well as I could——

JOHAN. And sacrificed your whole life in so doing!

MARTHA. It has not been thrown away. But you have been long of coming, Johan.

JOHAN. Martha—if I could say to you——Well, let me at any rate thank you for your faithful friendship.

MARTHA (*smiling sadly*). H'm—well, now we have made a clean breast of it, Johan. Hush, here comes some one. Good-by; I don't want them to—— (*She goes out through the farthest back door to the left.*)

LONA HESSEL *comes from the garden, followed by Mrs. BERNICK.*

MRS. BERNICK (*still in the garden*). Good heavens, what can you be thinking of?

LONA. Let me alone, I tell you; I must and will talk to him.

MRS. BERNICK. Think of the scandal it would be! Ah, Johan, are you still here?

LONA. Out with you, boy; don't hang about indoors in the stuffy rooms; go down the garden and talk to Dina.

JOHAN. That's just what I was thinking of doing.

MRS. BERNICK. But——

LONA. Listen, Johan; have you ever looked rightly at Dina?

JOHAN. Yes, I should think I had.

LONA. Well, you should look at her to some purpose. She's the very thing for you.

MRS. BERNICK. But, Lona——

JOHAN. The thing for me?

LONA. Yes; to look at, I mean. Now go!

JOHAN. Yes, yes, I don't need any driving. (*He goes down the garden.*)

MRS. BERNICK. Lona, you amaze me. You can't possibly be in earnest.

LONA. Yes, indeed I am. Isn't she fresh, and sound, and true? She is just the wife for John. She's the sort of companion he needs over there; something different from an old step-sister.

MRS. BERNICK. Dina! Dina Dorf! Consider a little——!

LONA. I consider first and foremost the boy's happiness. Help him I must and will; he is no hand at such things; he has never had much of an eye for women.

MRS. BERNICK. He? Johan! Why, haven't we sad cause to know that——

LONA. Oh, don't talk of that foolish story! Where is Bernick? I want to speak to him.

MRS. BERNICK. Lona, you must not do it, I tell you!

LONA. I shall do it. If the boy likes her, and she him, why then they shall have each other. Bernick is such a clever man; he must manage the thing——

MRS. BERNICK. And you think that these American improprieties will be tolerated here——

LONA. Nonsense, Betty——

MRS. BERNICK. That a man like Karsten, with his strict moral ideas——

LONA. Oh, come now, surely they're not so unreasonably strict.

MRS. BERNICK. What do you dare to say?

LONA. I dare to say that I don't believe Bernick is very much more moral than other men.

MRS. BERNICK. Is your hatred for him still so deep-rooted? But what do you want here, since you have never been able to forget that——? I can't understand how you dare look him in the face, after the shameful way you insulted him.

LONA. Yes, Betty, I forgot myself terribly that time.

MRS. BERNICK. And how nobly he has forgiven you—he, who had done no wrong. For *he* couldn't help your foolish fancies. But since that time you have hated me too. (*Bursts into tears.*) You have always envied me my happiness; and now you come here to heap this trouble upon me; to show the town what sort of a family I have brought Karsten into. Yes, it is I that have to suffer for it all, and that is what you want. Oh, it is cruel of you! (*She goes out crying through the farthest back door to the left.*)

LONA (*looking after her*). Poor Betty!

CONSUL BERNICK *comes out of his office.*

BERNICK (*still at the door*). Yes, yes, that is well, Krap; that is excellent. Send four hundred crowns for a dinner to the poor. (*Turns.*) Lona! (*Coming nearer.*) You are alone? Isn't Betty here?

LONA. No. Shall I fetch her?

BERNICK. No, no; do not. Oh, Lona, you do not know how I have burned to talk openly with you—to beg your forgiveness.

LONA. Now listen, Karsten; don't let us get sentimental. It doesn't suit us.

BERNICK. You *shall* hear me, Lona. I know very well how much appearances are against me, since you know all that about Dina's mother. But I swear to you that it was only a short madness; at one time I really, truly, and honestly loved you.

LONA. What do you think has brought me home just now?

BERNICK. Whatever you are intending, I implore you to do nothing before I have justified myself. I can do it, Lona; at least I can show that I was not altogether to blame.

LONA. Now you are frightened. You once loved me, you say. Yes, you assured me so, often enough in your letters; and perhaps it was true, too, after a fashion, so long as you were living out there in a great, free world, that gave you courage to think freely and greatly yourself. You, perhaps, found in me a little more character, and will, and independence than in most people at home here. And then it was a secret between us two; no one could make fun of your bad taste.

BERNICK. Lona, how can you think——?

LONA. But when you came home, when you saw the ridicule that poured down upon me, when you heard the laughter at what were called my eccentricities——

BERNICK. You *were* extravagant then.

LONA. Principally for the sake of annoying the prudes, both in trousers and petticoats, that infested the town. And then you met that fascinating young actress——

BERNICK. The whole thing was a piece of folly——nothing more. I swear to you, not a tithe of the scandal and tittle-tattle was true.

LONA. Perhaps so; but then Betty came home——

young, beautiful, idolized by everyone—and when it became known that she was to have all our aunt's money and I nothing——

BERNICK. Yes, here we are at the root of the matter, Lona ; and now you shall hear the square truth. I did not love Betty ; it was for no new fancy that I broke with you ; it was entirely for the sake of the money. I was forced to do it ; I *had* to make sure of the money.

LONA. And you tell me this to my face !

BERNICK. Yes, I do. Hear me, Lona—— !

LONA. And yet you wrote me that an unconquerable love for Betty had seized you, appealed to my magnanimity, conjured me for Betty's sake to say nothing of what had passed between us——

BERNICK. I had to, I tell you.

LONA. Now, by all that's holy, I don't regret having forgotten myself as I did that day.

BERNICK. Let me tell you, calmly and quietly, what my position was at that time. My mother, you know, stood at the head of the business ; but she had no business ability. I was called home quickly from Paris ; the times were critical ; I was to retrieve the situation. What did I find ? I found—what had to be kept strictly secret—a house as good as ruined. Yes, it was as good as ruined, the old, respected house, that had stood through three generations. What could I, the son, the only son, do, but look about me for a means of saving it ?

LONA. So you saved the house of Bernick at the expense of a woman.

BERNICK. You know very well that Betty loved me.

LONA. But I ?



BERNICK. Believe me, Lona, you would never have been happy with me.

LONA. Was it your care for my happiness that made you give me up?

BERNICK. Perhaps you think I acted from selfish motives? If I had stood alone then, I would have begun the world again bravely and cheerfully. But you don't understand how the head of a great house becomes a living part of the business he inherits, with its enormous responsibility. Do you know that the weal and woe of hundreds, ay, of thousands, depends upon him? Can you not consider that the whole community, which both you and I call our home, would have suffered deeply if the house of Bernick had fallen?

LONA. Is it for the sake of the community, then, that for these fifteen years you have stood upon a lie?

BERNICK. A lie?

LONA. How much does Betty know of all that lies beneath and before her marriage with you?

BERNICK. Can you think that I would wound her to no purpose by telling her these things?

LONA. To no purpose, you say? Well, well, you are a business man; you should understand what is to the purpose. But, listen, Karsten; I, too, will speak calmly and quietly. Tell me, after all, are you really happy?

BERNICK. In my family do you mean?

LONA. Of course.

BERNICK. I am indeed, Lona. Oh, you have not sacrificed yourself in vain. I can say truly that I have grown happier year by year. Betty is so good and kind, and in the course of years she has learned to mould her character to what is peculiar in mine——

LONA. H'm !

BERNICK. At first, indeed, she had some high-flown notions about love ; she could not reconcile herself to the thought that, little by little, it must pass over into a quiet friendship.

LONA. And is she quite reconciled to that *now* ?

BERNICK. Entirely. You may guess that daily intercourse with me has not been without a ripening influence upon her. People must learn to moderate their personal claims if they are to fulfil their duties in the community in which they are placed. Betty has by degrees come to understand this, so that our house is now a model for our fellow-citizens.

LONA. But these fellow-citizens know nothing of the lie ?

BERNICK. Of the lie ?

LONA. Yes ; of the lie upon which you have stood for these fifteen years.

BERNICK. You call that——?

LONA. I call it the lie—the threefold lie. First the lie toward me ; then the lie toward Betty ; then the lie toward Johan.

BERNICK. Betty has never asked me to speak.

LONA. Because she has known nothing.

BERNICK. And you will not ask me to ; out of consideration for her you will not.

LONA. Oh, no ; I dare say I shall manage to bear all the ridicule ; I have a broad back.

BERNICK. And Johan will not ask me either—he has promised me that.

LONA. But you, yourself, Karsten ; is there not something within you that longs to get clear of the lie ?

BERNICK. You would have me voluntarily sacrifice my domestic happiness, and my position in society?

LONA. What right have you to stand where you are standing?

BERNICK. For fifteen years I have every day gained more and more right—by my whole life, by all I have labored for, by all I have achieved.

LONA. Yes, you have labored for much and achieved much, both for yourself and others. You are the richest and most powerful man in the town; they have to bow before your will, all of them, because you are held to be without stain or flaw—your home is held to be a model, your life a model. But all this eminence, and you yourself along with it, stand on a trembling quicksand; a moment may come, a word may be spoken, and, if you do not save yourself in time, you and your whole grandeur go to the bottom.

BERNICK. Lona, what did you come here to do?

LONA. To help you to get firm ground under your feet, Karsten.

BERNICK. Revenge! You want to revenge yourself. I thought so long ago. But you cannot do it. There is only one who has a right to speak, and he is silent.

LONA. Johan?

BERNICK. Yes, Johan. If anyone else accuses me, I shall deny all. If you try to crush me, I shall fight for my life. But I tell you you will never succeed. He who could destroy me will not speak—and he is going away again.

*RUMMEL and VIGELAND enter from the right.*

RUMMEL. Good-day, good-day, my dear Bernick; you

must come with us to the trade council. We have a meeting on the subject of the railway, you know.

BERNICK. I cannot ; it is impossible just now.

VIGELAND. You really must, Consul.

RUMMEL. You must, Bernick. There are people working against us. Editor Hammer and the others who went for the coast line declare that there are private interests hidden behind the new proposal.

BERNICK. Why, then, explain to them——

VIGELAND. It does no good explaining to them, Consul.

RUMMEL. No, no, you must come yourself. Of course no one will dare to suspect you of anything of that sort.

LONA. No, I should think not.

BERNICK. I cannot, I tell you ; I am unwell ;—or at any rate wait—let me collect myself.

RECTOR RÖRLUND *enters from the right.*

RÖRLUND. Excuse me, Consul ; you see me most painfully agitated——

BERNICK. Well, well, what is the matter with you ?

RÖRLUND. I must ask you a question, Consul. Is it with your consent that the young girl who has found an asylum under your roof shows herself in the public streets in company with a person whom——

LONA. What person, Pastor ?

RÖRLUND. With the person from whom, of all others in the world, she should be kept farthest apart.

LONA. Ho ! ho !

RÖRLUND. Is it with your consent, Consul ?

BERNICK. I know nothing about it. (*Looking for his hat and gloves.*) Excuse me ; I am in a hurry ; I am going up to the trade council.

HILMAR (*comes from the garden and goes over to the farthest back door to the left.*) Betty, Betty, come here!

MRS. BERNICK (*at the door*). What is it?

HILMAR. You must go down the garden and put an end to the flirtation which a certain person is carrying on with that Dina Dorf. It has made me quite nervous to listen to it.

LONA. Indeed? What did the certain person say?

HILMAR. Oh, only that he wants her to go with him to America. Ugh!

RÖRLUND. Can such things be possible?

MRS. BERNICK. *What* do you say?

LONA. Why, that would be capital.

BERNICK. Impossible! You have made a mistake.

HILMAR. Then ask himself. Here comes the couple. Only let me be out of the business.

BERNICK (*to RUMMEL and VIGELAND*). I shall follow you—in a moment—

RUMMEL and VIGELAND *go out to the right.* JOHAN TÖNNESEN and DINA *come in from the garden.*

JOHAN. Hurrah, Lona, she is coming with us!

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, Johan—how can you—!

RÖRLUND. Can this be true? Such a crying scandal! By what arts of seduction have you—?

JOHAN. What, what, man? what are you saying?

RÖRLUND. Answer me, Dina; is this your intention—is it your full and free determination?

DINA. I *must* get away from here.

RÖRLUND. But with him—with him?

DINA. Tell me of anyone else that has courage to set me free?

RÖRLUND. Then I must let you know who he is.

JOHAN. Be silent!

BERNICK. Not a word more!

RÖRLUND. Then I should ill serve the community over whose manners and morals I am placed as a guardian; and I should act most indefensibly toward this young girl, in whose training I too have had an important part, and who is to me——

JOHAN. Take care what you are doing!

RÖRLUND. She *shall* know it! Dina, it was this man who caused all your mother's misfortune and shame.

BERNICK. Rector——!

DINA. He! (*To JOHAN.*) Is this true?

JOHAN. Karsten, you answer!

BERNICK. Not a word more! Not a word more to-day.

DINA. Then it is true.

RÖRLUND. True, true! and more than that. This person, in whom you were about to place your trust, did not run away empty-handed;—Widow Bernick's strong box—the Consul can bear witness!

LONA. Liar!

BERNICK. Ah——!

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, God! oh, God!

JOHAN (*goes toward him with uplifted arm*). You dare to——!

LONA (*keeping him back*). Do not strike him, Johan.

RÖRLUND. Yes, yes; attack me if you like. But the truth shall out; and this is the truth. Consul Bernick has said so himself, and the whole town knows it. Now, Dina, now you know him. (*A short pause.*)

JOHAN (*softly, seizing BERNICK'S arm*). Karsten, Karsten, what have you done?

MRS. BERNICK (*softly, in tears*). Oh, Karsten, that I should bring all this shame upon you.

SANDSTAD (*comes quickly in from the right, and says, with his hand still on the door-handle*). You must really come now, Consul! The whole railway is hanging by a thread.

BERNICK (*absently*). What is it? What am I to——?

LONA (*earnestly, and with emphasis*). You are to rise and support society, brother-in-law.

SANDSTAD. Yes, come, come; we need all your moral predominance.

JOHAN (*close to him*). Bernick, we two will talk of this to-morrow. (*He goes out through the garden; BERNICK goes out to the right with SANDSTAD, as if his will were paralyzed.*)

### ACT III.

[*The garden-room in CONSUL BERNICK'S house. BERNICK, with a cane in his hand, enters, in a violent passion, from the farthest back room to the left, leaving the door half open behind him.*]

BERNICK. There now ! At last I've done it in earnest ; I don't think he'll forget that thrashing. (*To someone in the other room.*) What do you say ? But *I* say you are a foolish mother ! You make excuses for him, and support him in all his naughtiness. Not naughtiness ? What do you call it then ? To steal out of the house at night and go to sea in a fishing-boat ; to remain out till late in the day, and put me in mortal terror (though goodness knows I've enough anxiety without that). And the young rascal dares to threaten me with running away ! Just let him try it ! You ? No, I dare say not ; you don't seem to care much what becomes of him. I believe if he were to get killed—— ! Oh, indeed ; but I have work to leave behind me here in the world. I can't afford to be left childless. Don't argue, Betty, it must be as I say ; he must be kept in the house. (*Listens.*) Hush, don't let people notice anything.

KRAP *comes in from the right.*

KRAP. Can you spare me a moment, Consul ?

BERNICK (*throws away the cane*). Of course, of course ; have you come from the yard ?



KRAP. Just this moment. H'm——!

BERNICK. Well? There's nothing wrong with the *Palm Tree* I hope?

KRAP. The *Palm Tree* can sail to-morrow, but——

BERNICK. The *Indian Girl*, then? I might have guessed that that stiff-necked——

KRAP. The *Indian Girl* can sail to-morrow, too; but—I don't think she'll get very far.

BERNICK. What do you mean?

KRAP. Excuse me, Consul; that door is ajar, and I think there is someone in the room.

BERNICK (*shuts the door*). There now. But what is the meaning of all this secrecy?

KRAP. It means this: that I believe Aune intends to send the *Indian Girl* to the bottom, with every soul on board.

BERNICK. Good heavens! how can you think——?

KRAP. I cannot explain it any other way, Consul.

BERNICK. Well then, tell me in as few words as——

KRAP. I shall. You know how slowly things have been going in the yard since we got the new machines and the new inexperienced workmen?

BERNICK. Yes, yes.

KRAP. But this morning, when I went down there, I noticed that the repairs on the American had been going at a great rate. The big patch in her bottom—the rotten place, you know——

BERNICK. Yes, yes! what of it?

KRAP. It was completely repaired—to all appearance; covered over; looked as good as new. I heard that Aune himself had been working at it by lantern-light the whole night through.

BERNICK. Yes, yes, and then——?

KRAP. I went and examined it; the workmen had just gone to their breakfast, so I was able to look about unnoticed, both outside and inside. It was difficult to get down into the hold, as she is loaded. There is rascality at work, Consul.

BERNICK. I cannot believe it, Krap. I cannot and will not believe such a thing of Aune.

KRAP. I am sorry for it, but it is the plain truth. There is rascality at work, I say. There was no new timber put in, so far as I could see. It was only botched and puttied up, and covered with tarpaulins, and so forth. All bogus! The *Indian Girl* will never get to New York. She'll go to the bottom like a cracked pot.

BERNICK. But this is horrible! What do you think can be his motive?

KRAP. He probably wants to bring the machines into discredit; wants to revenge himself; wants to have the old workmen taken on again.

BERNICK. And for that he would sacrifice all these lives?

KRAP. He has been heard to say that there are no men on board the *Indian Girl*—only beasts.

BERNICK. Yes, yes, that may be; but does he not think of the immense capital that will be lost?

KRAP. Aune doesn't regard immense capital with a very friendly eye, Consul.

BERNICK. True enough; he is an agitator and spreader of discontent; but such a piece of villany as this! Listen, Krap; this affair must be examined into again. Not a word of it to any one. Our yard would fall into bad repute if people got to know anything of this sort.

KRAP. Of course, but——

BERNICK. During the dinner hour you must go down there again ; I must have perfect certainty.

KRAP. You shall, Consul ; but, excuse me, what will you do then ?

BERNICK. Why, report the case, of course. We cannot make ourselves accessories to a crime. I must keep my conscience unspotted. Besides, it will make a good impression on both the press and the public at large when they see that I set aside all personal considerations and let justice take its course.

KRAP. Very true, Consul.

BERNICK. But, first of all, perfect certainty—and, until then, silence——

KRAP. Not a word, Consul ; and you shall have absolute certainty. (*He goes out through the garden and down the street.*)

BERNICK (*half aloud*). Horrible ! But no, it is impossible—inconceivable !

*As he turns to go to his own room HILMAR TÖNNESEN enters from the right.*

HILMAR. Good-day, Bernick ! Well, I congratulate you on your field-day in the trade council yesterday.

BERNICK. Oh, thanks.

HILMAR. It was a brilliant victory, I hear, the victory of intelligent public spirit over self-interest and prejudice—like a French razzia upon the Kabyles. Strange, that after the unpleasant scene here, you——

BERNICK. Yes, yes, don't speak of it.

HILMAR. But the tug of war is to come yet.

BERNICK. In the matter of the railway, you mean ?

HILMAR. Yes, I suppose you have heard of the egg that Editor Hammer is hatching?

BERNICK (*anxiously*). No! What is it?

HILMAR. Oh, he has got hold of the report that is going about, and is going to make an article of it.

BERNICK. What report?

HILMAR. Of course, that about the great purchase of property along the branch line.

BERNICK. What do you mean? Is there such a report?

HILMAR. Yes, over the whole town. I heard it at the club. It is said that one of our lawyers has been secretly commissioned to buy up all the forests, all the veins of ore, all the water-power——

BERNICK. And is it known for whom?

HILMAR. At the club everyone thought that it must be for a company from some other town that had got wind of your scheme, and had rushed in before the prices rose. Isn't it mean? disgraceful? Ugh!

BERNICK. Disgraceful?

HILMAR. Yes, that strangers should trespass on our preserves in that way. And that one of our own lawyers could lend himself to anything like that! Now, all the profit will go to strangers.

BERNICK. But this is only a vague rumor.

HILMAR. It is believed, at any rate; and to-morrow or next day Editor Hammer will, of course, go and nail it fast as a fact. Everyone was enraged about it already up there. I heard several say that if this rumor is confirmed they will strike their names off the lists.

BERNICK. Impossible!

HILMAR. Indeed? Why do you think these peddling creatures were so ready to join you in your undertak-

ing? Do you think they weren't themselves hankering after——?

BERNICK. Impossible, I say; there is at least so much public spirit in our little community——

HILMAR. Here? Oh, yes, you are an optimist, and judge others by yourself. But I am a pretty keen observer. There is not a person here—with the exception of ourselves, of course—not one, I say, who holds high the banner of the ideal. (*Up toward the background.*) Ugh, there they are.

BERNICK. Who?

HILMAR. The two Americans. (*Looks out to the right.*) And who is that they are with? Why, it's the captain of the *Indian Girl*. Ugh!

BERNICK. What can they want with him?

HILMAR. Oh, it's very appropriate company. They say he has been a slave-dealer or a pirate; and who knows what that couple have turned their hands to in all these years.

BERNICK. I tell you, it is utterly unjust to think so of them.

HILMAR. Yes, you are an optimist. But here we have them upon us again; so I'll get away in time. (*Goes toward the door on the left.*)

LONA HESSEL *enters by the door on the right.*

LONA. What, Hilmar, am I driving you away?

HILMAR. Not at all, not at all. I am in a great hurry; I have something to say to Betty. (*Goes out by the farthest back door on the left.*)

BERNICK (*after a short pause*). Well, Lona?

LONA. Well?

BERNICK. What do you think of me to-day?

LONA. The same as yesterday ; a lie more or less—— !

BERNICK. I must explain all this. Where has Johan gone to?

LONA. He'll be here directly ; he had to talk to a man out there.

BERNICK. After what you heard yesterday, you can understand that my whole position is ruined if the truth comes to light.

LONA. I understand.

BERNICK. Of course you know well enough that *I* was not guilty of the supposed crime.

LONA. Of course not. But who was the thief?

BERNICK. There was no thief. There was no money stolen ; not a halfpenny was wanting.

LONA. What?

BERNICK. Not a halfpenny, I say.

LONA. But the rumor? How did that shameful rumor get abroad, that Johan——?

BERNICK. Lona, I find I can talk to you as I can to no other person ; I shall conceal nothing from you. *I* had my share in spreading the rumor.

LONA. You! And you could do this wrong to the man who, for your sake——?

BERNICK. You must not condemn me without remembering how matters stood at the time. As I told you yesterday, I came home to find my mother involved in a whole series of foolish undertakings. Misfortunes of various kinds followed. It seemed as if all possible ill-luck came upon us at once ; our house was on the verge of ruin. I was half reckless and half in despair, Lona. I believe it was principally to deaden thought that I got

into that entanglement which ended in Johan's running away.

LONA. H'm——

BERNICK. You can easily imagine how all sorts of rumors got abroad after he and you left. It was said that this was not his first misdemeanor. Some said Dorf had received a large sum of money from him to keep quiet and go away ; others declared that she had got the money. At the same time it got abroad that our house had difficulty in meeting its engagements. What more natural than that the gossips should put these two rumors together ? As Madam Dorf remained here in unmistakable poverty, people began to say that he had taken the money with him to America, and rumor made the sum larger and larger every day.

LONA. And you, Karsten—— ?

BERNICK. I clutched at the rumor as a drowning man clutches at a straw.

LONA. You helped to spread it.

BERNICK. I did not contradict it. Our creditors were beginning to press upon us ; what I had to do was to quiet them ; the great point was to keep people from suspecting the solidity of the firm. A momentary misfortune had befallen us, but if people only refrained from pressing us, if they would only give us time, everyone could have his own.

LONA. And everyone got his own ?

BERNICK. Yes, Lona, that rumor saved our house, and made me the man I am.

LONA. A lie, then, has made you the man you are.

BERNICK. Whom did it hurt, then ? Johan intended never to return.

LONA. You ask whom it hurt. Look into yourself and see if it has not hurt you.

BERNICK. Look into any man you please, and you will find at least one dark spot which he must keep covered.

LONA. And you call yourselves the pillars of society!

BERNICK. Society has none better.

LONA. Then what does it matter whether such a society is supported or not? What is it that passes current here? Lies and shams—nothing else. Here are you, the first man in the town, living in wealth and pride, in power and honor, you, who have set the brand of crime upon an innocent man.

BERNICK. Do you think I do not feel deeply how I have wronged him? Do you think I am not prepared to make atonement?

LONA. How? By speaking out?

BERNICK. Can you ask such a thing?

LONA. What else can atone for such a wrong?

BERNICK. I am rich, Lona; Johan may ask what he pleases——

LONA. Yes, offer him money and you'll see what he'll answer.

BERNICK. Do you know what he intends to do?

LONA. No. Since yesterday he has been silent. It seems as if all this had suddenly made a full-grown man of him.

BERNICK. I must speak to him.

LONA. Then here he is.

JOHAN TÖNNESEN *enters from the right.*

BERNICK (*going toward him*). Johan——!



JOHAN. Let me speak first. Yesterday morning I gave you my word to be silent.

BERNICK. You did.

JOHAN. But I did not know then——

BERNICK. Johan, let me in two words explain the circumstances——

JOHAN. There is no need ; I understand the circumstances very well. Your house was then in a difficult position ; and when I was no longer here, and you had my unprotected name and fame to do what you liked with—— Well, I don't blame you so much for it ; we were young and heedless in those days. But now I have need of the truth, and now you must speak out.

BERNICK. And just at this moment I need all my moral repute, and so cannot speak out.

JOHAN. I don't care so much about the falsehoods you have spread abroad about me ; it is the other thing you yourself must take the blame of. Dina shall be my wife, and I shall live here, here in this town along with her.

LONA. You will ?

BERNICK. With Dina ! As your wife ? Here in this town ?

JOHAN. Yes, just here ; I shall remain here to defy all these liars and backbiters. And that I may win her, you must set me free.

BERNICK. Have you considered that to admit the one thing is to admit the other as well ? You may say that I can prove by our books that there was no robbery at all. But I cannot ; our books weren't kept so exactly at that time. And even if I could, what would be gained by it ? Should I not, at best, appear as the man who

had once saved himself by a falsehood, and who for fifteen years had let that falsehood, and all its consequences, stand untouched, without saying a word against it? You have forgotten what our society is, or you would know that that would crush me to the very dust.

JOHAN. I can only repeat to you that I shall make Madam Dorf's daughter my wife, and live with her here in the town.

BERNICK (*wipes the perspiration from his forehead*). Hear me, Johan—and you, too, Lona. The circumstances in which I am placed at this moment are not ordinary ones. I am so situated, that if you strike this blow you ruin me utterly, and not only me, but also a great and blessed future for the community which was the home of your childhood.

JOHAN. And if I do not strike the blow, I destroy the whole happiness of my future life.

LONA. Go on, Karsten.

BERNICK. Then listen. It all arises from this affair of the railway, and that is not so simple as you think. You have, of course, heard that last year there was a talk of a coast-line? It had many and powerful advocates in the town and neighborhood, and especially in the press; but I got it shelved, because it would have injured our steamboat trade along the coast.

LONA. Have you an interest in this steamboat trade?

BERNICK. Yes. But no one dared to suspect me on that account. My honored name was an ample safeguard. For that matter, I could have borne the loss; but the town could not have borne it. Then the inland line was determined on. When that was settled, I

assured myself secretly that a branch line could be constructed down to the town.

LONA. Why secretly, Karsten?

BERNICK. Have you heard any talk of the great buying-up of forests, mines, and water-power?

JOHAN. Yes, for a company in some other town——

BERNICK. As these properties now lie they are as good as worthless to their scattered owners; so they have been sold comparatively cheap. If the buyer had waited until the branch line was generally spoken of, the holders would have demanded fancy prices.

LONA. Very likely; but what then?

BERNICK. Now comes the point which may or may not be interpreted favorably—a thing which no man in our community could risk, unless he had a spotless and honored name to rely upon.

LONA. Well?

BERNICK. It is I who have bought the whole.

LONA. You?

JOHAN. On your own account?

BERNICK. On my own account. If the branch line is made, I am a millionaire; if it is not made, I am ruined.

LONA. This is a great risk, Karsten.

BERNICK. I have staked all I possess upon the throw.

LONA. I was not thinking of the money; but when it is known that——

BERNICK. Yes, that is the great point. With the spotless name I have hitherto borne I can take the whole affair upon my shoulders and carry it through, saying to my fellow-citizens, "See, this I have dared for the good of the community!"

LONA. Of the community?

BERNICK. Yes ; and not one will question my motives.

LONA. Then, after all, there are men here who have acted more openly than you, with no concealed motives, without private considerations.

BERNICK. Who ?

LONA. Why, of course, Rummel and Sandstad and Vigeland.

BERNICK. To gain them over I had to let them into the secret.

LONA. And then ?

BERNICK. They have stipulated for a fifth of the profits to be divided between them.

LONA. Oh, these pillars of society !

BERNICK. Don't you see that it is society itself that forces us into these subterfuges ? What would have happened if I had not acted secretly ? Why, everyone would have thrown himself into the undertaking, and the whole thing would have been broken up, divided, bungled, and spoiled. There is not a single man in the town here, except myself, that knows how to manage an enormous concern such as this will become ; in this country the men of real business ability are almost all of foreign origin. That is why my conscience acquits me in this matter. Only in my hands can all these properties become a lasting benefit to the many who will make their bread out of them.

LONA. I believe you are right there, Karsten.

JOHAN. But I know nothing of "the many," and my life's happiness is at stake.

BERNICK. The welfare of your native place is also at stake. If things come to the surface which cast a slur upon my former conduct, all my opponents will fall

upon me with united strength. A boyish error is never atoned for in our society. People will go over my whole life during the interval, will rake up a thousand little circumstances, and explain and interpret them in the light of what has been discovered; they will crush me beneath the weight of rumors and slanders. I shall have to retire from the railway affairs; and if I take my hand away the whole thing will fall to pieces, and I shall lose both my fortune and, as it were, my social life.

LONA. Johan, after what you have heard you must be silent and go away.

BERNICK. Yes, yes, Johan, you must.

JOHAN. Yes, I shall go away, and be silent too; but I shall come back again, and then I shall speak.

BERNICK. Remain over there, Johan; be silent, and I am ready to share with you——

JOHAN. Keep your money, and give me back my name and fame.

BERNICK. And sacrifice my own!

JOHAN. You and your society must settle that! I must and shall win Dina for myself. So I shall sail to-morrow with the *Indian Girl*.

BERNICK. With the *Indian Girl*?

JOHAN. Yes; the captain has promised to take me. I shall go over, I tell you; I shall sell my farm, and arrange my affairs. In two months I shall be back again.

BERNICK. And then you will tell all?

JOHAN. Then the guilty one must take the guilt upon himself.

BERNICK. Do you forget that I must also take upon me guilt which is not mine?

JOHAN. Who was it that, fifteen years ago, reaped the benefit of that slander?

BERNICK. You drive me to desperation! But, if you speak, I shall deny all! I shall say it is a conspiracy against me; a piece of revenge; that you have come here to blackmail me!

LONA. Shame on you, Karsten!

BERNICK. I am desperate, I tell you; I am fighting for my life. I shall deny all, all!

JOHAN. I have your two letters. I found them in my box among my other papers. I read them through this morning; they are plain enough.

BERNICK. And you will produce them?

JOHAN. If you force me.

BERNICK. And in two months you will be here again?

JOHAN. I hope so. The wind is good. In three weeks I shall be in New York, if the *Indian Girl* doesn't go to the bottom.

BERNICK (*starting*). Go to the bottom? Why should the *Indian Girl* go to the bottom?

JOHAN. That's just what I say.

BERNICK (*almost inaudibly*). Go to the bottom?

JOHAN. Well, Bernick, now you know what you have to expect; you must do what you can in the meantime. Good-by! Give my love to Betty, though she certainly hasn't received me in the most sisterly fashion. But Martha I must see. She must say to Dina—she must promise me—— (*He goes out by the farthest back door on the left.*)

BERNICK (*to himself*). The *Indian Girl*——? (*Quickly.*) Lona, you must get this stopped!

LONA. You see yourself, Karsten—I have lost all

power over him. (*She follows JOHAN into the room on the left.*)

BERNICK (*in unquiet thought*). Go to the bottom——?

AUNE *enters from the right.*

AUNE. Excuse me, Consul, are you disengaged——?

BERNICK (*turns angrily*). What do you want?

AUNE. I wish, by your leave, to ask you a question, Consul Bernick.

BERNICK. Well, well; be quick. What do you want to ask about?

AUNE. I want to know if it is your determination—your fixed determination—to dismiss me if the *Indian Girl* should not be able to sail to-morrow?

BERNICK. What now? The ship *will* be ready to sail.

AUNE. Yes, she will. But supposing she were not—should I be dismissed?

BERNICK. Why do you ask such a useless question?

AUNE. I want very much to know, Consul. Just answer me; should I be dismissed?

BERNICK. Do I generally change my mind?

AUNE. Then to-morrow I should have lost the position I now hold in my home and in my family—lost all my influence over the workmen—lost all opportunity of advancing the cause of the needy and oppressed?

BERNICK. Aune, we have discussed that point long ago.

AUNE. Yes—then the *Indian Girl* must sail. (*A short pause.*)

BERNICK. Listen; I cannot look after everything myself; cannot be responsible for everything. I suppose you are prepared to assure me that the repairs are thoroughly carried out?

AUNE. You gave me very short time, Consul.

BERNICK. But the repairs are all right, you say?

AUNE. The weather is fine, and it is midsummer.

(*Another pause.*)

BERNICK. Have you anything more to say to me?

AUNE. I don't know of anything else, Consul.

BERNICK. Then—the *Indian Girl* sails——

AUNE. To-morrow?

BERNICK. Yes.

AUNE. Very well. (*He bows and goes out. BERNICK stands for a moment undecided; then he goes quickly to the door as if to call AUNE back, but stops and stands hesitating, with his hand on the handle. Immediately after the door is opened from outside and KRAP enters.*)

KRAP (*speaking low*). Aha, he has been here. Has he confessed?

BERNICK. H'm——; have you discovered anything?

KRAP. What need was there? Did you not see the evil conscience looking out of his very eyes?

BERNICK. Oh, nonsense;—such things are not to be seen. Have you discovered anything, I ask?

KRAP. I couldn't get to the place; I was too late; they were busy hauling the ship out of dock. But this very haste proves plainly that——

BERNICK. It proves nothing. The inspection has taken place, then?

KRAP. Of course; but——

BERNICK. There, you see! and they've found nothing to complain of?

KRAP. Consul, you know very well how such inspections are conducted, especially in a yard that has such a good name as ours.



BERNICK. That does not matter ; it relieves us of all reproach.

KRAP. Could you really not see, Consul, from Aune's very look, that——?

BERNICK. Aune has entirely satisfied me, I tell you.

KRAP. And I tell you I am morally convinced——

BERNICK. What does this mean, Krap? I know very well that you have a grudge against the man ; but if you want to attack him, you should choose some other opportunity. You know how necessary it is for me—or rather for the owners—that the *Indian Girl* should sail to-morrow.

KRAP. Very well ; so be it ; but if ever we hear again of that ship—h'm !

VIGELAND enters from the right.

VIGELAND. How do you do, Consul? Have you a moment to spare ?

BERNICK. At your service, Mr. Vigeland.

VIGELAND. I only want to know if you agree with me that the *Palm Tree* should sail to-morrow.

BERNICK. Yes—I thought that was settled.

VIGELAND. But the captain has just come to tell me that the storm-signals have been hoisted.

KRAP. The barometer has fallen rapidly since this morning.

BERNICK. Indeed? Is there a storm coming?

VIGELAND. A stiff gale at any rate ; but not a contrary wind ; quite the reverse——

BERNICK. H'm ; what do you say, then?

VIGELAND. I say as I said to the captain, that the *Palm Tree* is in the hands of Providence. And besides,

she's only going over the North Sea to begin with; and freights are tolerably high in England just now, so that——

BERNICK. Yes, it would probably be a loss to us if we delayed.

VIGELAND. The vessel's well built, you know, and fully insured as well. I can tell you it's another matter with the *Indian Girl*——

BERNICK. What do you mean?

VIGELAND. Why, she is to sail to-morrow too.

BERNICK. Yes, the owners hurried us on, and besides——

VIGELAND. Well, if that old hulk can venture out—and with such a crew into the bargain—it would be a shame if we couldn't——

BERNICK. Well, well; I suppose you have got the ship's papers with you.

VIGELAND. Yes, here they are.

BERNICK. Good; perhaps you will go with Mr. Krap.

KRAP. This way, please; we'll soon put them in order.

VIGELAND. Thanks—and the result we will leave in the hands of Omnipotence, Consul. (*He goes with KRAP into the foremost room on the left.*)

RECTOR RÖRLUND *comes through the garden.*

RÖRLUND. Ah, is it possible you are to be found at home at this time of the day, Consul?

BERNICK (*absently*). As you see!

RÖRLUND. It was really to see your wife that I looked in. I thought she might need a word of consolation.

BERNICK. I dare say she does. But I, too, should like a word or two with you.

RÖRLUND. With pleasure, Consul. But what is the matter with you? You look quite pale and disturbed.

BERNICK. Indeed? Do I? Well, it could scarcely be otherwise, with such a lot of things besetting me all at once. In addition to all my usual business, I have this affair of the railway. Listen a moment, Rector; let me ask you a question.

RÖRLUND. With great pleasure, Consul.

BERNICK. A thought has occurred to me lately; when one stands at the commencement of a wide-stretching undertaking, intended to promote the welfare of thousands, if a single sacrifice should be demanded——?

RÖRLUND. How do you mean?

BERNICK. Take, for example, a man who is starting a great manufactory. He knows very certainly—all experience has taught him—that sooner or later, in the working of that manufactory, human life will be lost.

RÖRLUND. Yes, it is only too probable.

BERNICK. Or he is engaged in mining operations. He takes both fathers of families and young men in the hey-day of life into his service. Cannot it be said with certainty that some of these are bound to perish in the undertaking?

RÖRLUND. Unfortunately there can be little doubt of that.

BERNICK. Well; such a man, then, knows beforehand that his enterprise will undoubtedly, some time or other, lead to the loss of life. But the undertaking is for the greater good of the greater number; for every life it costs, it will, with equal certainty, promote the welfare of many hundreds.

RÖRLUND. Aha, you are thinking of the railway—of all

the dangerous tunnellings and blastings, and that sort of thing——

BERNICK. Yes—yes, of course ; I am thinking of the railway. And, besides, the railway will bring in its train both manufactories and mines. But don't you think that——

RÖRLUND. My dear Consul, you are almost too Quixotic. If you place the affair in the hand of Providence——

BERNICK. Yes—yes, of course ; Providence——

RÖRLUND. You can have nothing to reproach yourself with. Go on and prosper with the railway.

BERNICK. Yes, but let us take a peculiar case. Let us suppose a mine had to be sprung at a dangerous place ; and, unless it was sprung, the railway would come to a standstill. Suppose the engineer knows that it will cost the life of the workman who fires the train ; but fired it must be, and it is the engineer's duty to send a workman to do it.

RÖRLUND. H'm——

BERNICK. I know what you will say : It would be noble for the engineer himself to take the match and go and fire the train. But no one does such things. Then he must sacrifice a workman.

RÖRLUND. No engineer among us would ever do that.

BERNICK. No engineer in the great nations would think twice about doing it.

RÖRLUND. In the great nations. No, I dare say not. In these depraved and unprincipled communities——

BERNICK. Oh, these communities have their good points, too.

RÖRLUND. Can you say that—you, who yourself——?

BERNICK. In the great nations one has always room to press forward a useful project. There, one has courage to sacrifice something for a great cause; but here, one is cramped in by all sorts of petty considerations.

RÖRLUND. Is a human life a petty consideration?

BERNICK. When that human life threatens the welfare of thousands.

RÖRLUND. But you are putting quite impossible cases, Consul. I don't understand you to-day. And you refer me to the great communities. Yes, there—what does a human life count for there? They think less of lives than of profits. But we, I hope, look at things from an entirely different moral standpoint. Think of our noble shipowners! Name me a single merchant here among us who, for paltry gain, would sacrifice a single life. And then think of those scoundrels in the great communities who make money by sending out one unseaworthy ship after another—

BERNICK. I am not speaking of unseaworthy ships.

RÖRLUND. But I am, Consul.

BERNICK. Yes, but to what purpose? It is quite away from the question. Oh, these little timid considerations! If a general among us were to lead his troops under fire, and get some of them shot, he wouldn't be able to sleep at night after it. It is not so in other places. You should hear what he says— (*Pointing to the door on the left.*)

RÖRLUND. He? Who, the American?

BERNICK. Of course. You should hear how people in America—

RÖRLUND. Is he in there? Why didn't you tell me. I shall go at once—

BERNICK. It is of no use. You will make no impression upon him.

RÖRLUND. That we shall see. Ah, here he is.

JOHAN TÖNNESEN *comes from the room on the left.*

JOHAN (*speaking through the open doorway*). Yes, yes, Dina, so be it; but I shall not give you up all the same. I shall return, and things will come all right between us.

RÖRLUND. Allow me. What do you mean by these words? What do you want?

JOHAN. I want that young girl, before whom you yesterday slandered me, to be my wife.

RÖRLUND. Yours? Can you think that——?

JOHAN. She *shall* be my wife.

RÖRLUND. Well, then, you shall hear—— (*Goes to the half-open door.*) Mrs. Bernick, you must have the kindness to be a witness. And you, too, Miss Martha; and let Dina come too. (*Sees LONA.*) Ah, are you here?

LONA (*at the door*). Shall I come too?

RÖRLUND. As many as will—the more the better.

BERNICK. What are you going to do?

LONA, MRS. BERNICK, MARTHA, DINA, and HILMAR TÖNNESEN *come out of the room on the left.*

MRS. BERNICK. Rector, all I can do cannot prevent him from——

RÖRLUND. I shall prevent him, Mrs. Bernick. Dina, you are a thoughtless girl. But I do not blame you very much. You have stood here too long without the moral support that should have kept you up. I blame myself for not having given you that support.

DINA. You must not speak now!

MRS. BERNICK. What is all this?

RÖRLUND. It is now that I must speak, Dina, though your behavior to-day has rendered it ten times more difficult for me. But all other considerations must give place to your rescue. You remember the promise I gave you. You remember what you promised to answer, when I found that the time had come. Now I can hesitate no longer, and therefore (*to JOHAN TÖNNESEN*) this young girl, whom you are pursuing, is my betrothed.

MRS. BERNICK. What do you say?

BERNICK. Dina!

JOHAN. She! Yours——?

MARTHA. No, no, Dina.

LONA. A lie!

JOHAN. Dina, does that man speak the truth?

DINA (*after a short pause*). Yes.

RÖRLUND. This, I trust, will paralyze all your arts of seduction. The step I have determined to take for Dina's welfare may now be made known to our whole community. I hope—nay, I am sure—that it will not be misinterpreted. And now, Mrs. Bernick, I think we had better take her away from here and try to restore the peace and equilibrium of her mind.

MRS. BERNICK. Yes, come. Oh, Dina, what happiness for you! (*She leads DINA out to the left; RECTOR RÖRLUND goes along with them.*)

MARTHA. Good-by, Johan! (*She goes out.*)

HILMAR (*at the garden door*). H'm—well, I really must say——

LONA (*who has been following DINA with her eyes*). Don't be cast down, boy! I shall remain here and look after the Pastor.

BERNICK. Johan, you won't go now with the *Indian Girl*!

JOHAN. Now more than ever.

BERNICK. Then you will not come back again?

JOHAN. I shall come back again.

BERNICK. After this? What can you do after this?

JOHAN. Revenge myself on you all; crush as many of you as I can. (*He goes out to the right.*)

VIGELAND and KRAP come from the Consul's office.

VIGELAND. See, the papers are in order now, Consul.

BERNICK. Good, good——

KRAP (*aside*). Then it is settled that the *Indian Girl* is to sail to-morrow?

BERNICK. She is to sail. (*He goes into his room.*

VIGELAND and KRAP go out to the right. HILMAR TÖNNESEN is following them, when OLAF peeps cautiously out at the door on the left.)

OLAF. Uncle! Uncle Hilmar!

HILMAR. Ugh, is that you? Why don't you remain upstairs? You know you are under arrest.

OLAF (*comes a few steps forward*). Hush! Uncle Hilmar, do you know the news?

HILMAR. Yes, I know that you got a thrashing to-day.

OLAF (*looks threateningly toward his father's room*). He sha'n't thrash me again. But do you know that Uncle Johan is to sail to-morrow with the Americans?

HILMAR. What is that to you? You get upstairs again!

OLAF. Perhaps I may go buffalo-hunting yet, uncle.

HILMAR. Rubbish; such a coward as you——

OLAF. Just wait a little; you'll hear something to-morrow.



HILMAR. Little blockhead! (*He goes out through the garden. OLAF runs out of the room and shuts the door when he catches sight of KRAP, who comes from the right.*)

KRAP (*goes up to the Consul's door and opens it a little*).  
Excuse my coming again, Consul, but there's a terrible storm brewing. (*He waits a moment ; there is no answer.*)  
Is the *Indian Girl* to sail in spite of it?

BERNICK (*after a short pause, answers from the office*).  
The *Indian Girl* is to sail in spite of it. (*KRAP shuts the door and goes out again to the right.*)

## ACT IV.

[*The garden-room in CONSUL BERNICK'S house. The table has been removed. It is a stormy evening, already half dark, and growing darker.*]

[*A servant lights the chandelier, two maid-servants bring in flower-pots, lamps, and candles, which are placed on tables and shelves along the wall. RUMMEL, wearing a dress-coat, white gloves, and a white necktie, stands in the room giving directions.*]

RUMMEL (*to the servant*). Only every second candle, Jacob. The place mustn't look too brilliant; it is supposed to be a surprise, you know. And all these flowers——? Oh, yes, let them stand; it will seem as if they were there always.

CONSUL BERNICK *comes out of his room.*

BERNICK (*at the door*). What is the meaning of all this?

RUMMEL. Oh, are you there? (*To the servants.*) Yes, you can go now. (*The servants go out by the farthest back door on the left.*)

BERNICK (*coming into the room*). Why, Rummel, what can all this mean?

RUMMEL. It means that the proudest moment of your life has arrived. The whole town is coming in procession to do honor to its leading citizen.

BERNICK. What do you mean?

RUMMEL. In procession and with music! We should have had torches too; but we dared not attempt it in this stormy weather. But there's to be an illumination; it will look quite splendid in the newspapers.

BERNICK. Listen, Rummel—I will have nothing to do with all this.

RUMMEL. Oh, it's too late now; they'll be here in half an hour.

BERNICK. Why have you not told me of this before?

RUMMEL. Just because I was afraid you would make objections. But I arranged it all with your wife; she allowed me to put things in order a little, and she is going to look to the refreshments herself.

BERNICK (*listening*). What is that? Are they coming already? I thought I heard singing.

RUMMEL (*at the garden door*). Singing? Oh, it is only the Americans. They are hauling out the *Indian Girl* to the buoy.

BERNICK. Hauling her out! Yes——; I really cannot this evening, Rummel; I am not well.

RUMMEL. You are certainly not looking well. But you must brace yourself up. Come, come, man, you must brace yourself up. I and Sandstad and Vigeland attach the greatest importance to getting this affair managed. Our opponents must be crushed under the weight of the unanimous utterance of public opinion. The rumors are spreading over the town; the announcement as to the purchase of the property can't be kept back any longer. This very evening, amid songs and speeches and the ring of brimming goblets, in short, amid all the effervescent festivity of the occasion, you must let them know what you have ventured for the

good of the community. With the aid of such effervescent festivity, as I have just expressed it, it's astonishing what one can effect here among us. But we must have the effervescence or it won't do.

BERNICK. Yes, yes, yes——

RUMMEL. And especially when such a difficult and delicate matter is to be brought forward. You have, thank Heaven, a name that will carry us through, Bernick. But listen now; we must make some arrangement. Hilmar Tønnesen has written a song in your honor. It begins very prettily with the line, "Wave th' Ideal's banner high." And Rector Rörlund has been commissioned to make the speech of the evening. Of course you must reply to it.

BERNICK. I cannot, I cannot this evening, Rummel. Could not you——?

RUMMEL. Impossible, however much I might like to. The speech will, of course, be mainly directed to you. Perhaps a few words will be devoted to the rest of us. I have spoken to Vigeland and Sandstad about it. We had arranged that you should answer with a toast to the welfare of the community; Sandstad should say a few words on the union between the different classes of the community; Vigeland should express the fervent hope that our new undertaking may not disturb the moral foundation upon which we have placed the community; and I should call attention, in a few well-chosen words, to the claims of Woman, whose more modest activity is not without its use in the community. But you are not listening.

BERNICK. Yes—yes, I am. But, tell me, do you think the sea is running very high outside?

RUMMEL. Oh, you are anxious on account of the *Palm Tree*? She's well insured, isn't she?

BERNICK. Yes, insured; but——

RUMMEL. And in good repair; and that's the main thing.

BERNICK. H'm—and even if anything happens to a vessel, it doesn't follow that lives will be lost. The ship and cargo may go to the bottom—people may lose chests and papers——

RUMMEL. Good gracious, chests and papers aren't of so much importance.

BERNICK. You think not! No, no, I only meant—— Hark;—that singing again!

RUMMEL. It is on board the *Palm Tree*.

VIGELAND enters from the right.

VIGELAND. Yes, they're hauling out the *Palm Tree*. Good evening, Consul!

BERNICK. And you, who know the sea well, hold fast to——?

VIGELAND. I hold fast to Providence, Consul; besides, I have been on board and distributed a few leaflets, which I hope will act with a blessing.

SANDSTAD and KRAP enter from the right.

SANDSTAD (at the door). It's a miracle if they escape. Ah, here we are—good evening, good evening.

BERNICK. Is anything the matter, Krap?

KRAP. I have nothing to say, Consul

SANDSTAD. Every man on board the *Indian Girl* is drunk. If these animals ever get over alive, I'm no prophet.

LONA comes from the right.

LONA (*to Bernick*). Well, I've been seeing him off.

BERNICK. Is he on board already?

LONA. Will be soon, at any rate. We parted outside the hotel.

BERNICK. And he holds to his purpose?

LONA. Firm as a rock.

RUMMEL (*at one of the windows*). Deuce take these new-fashioned arrangements. I can't get the blinds down.

LONA. Are they to come down? I thought, on the contrary——

RUMMEL. They are to be down at first, Miss Hessel. Of course you know what is going on?

LONA. Oh, of course. Let me help you. (*Takes one of the cords.*) I shall let the curtain fall upon my brother-in-law—though I would rather raise it.

RUMMEL. That you can do later. When the garden is filled with a surging crowd then the curtains rise and they look in upon a surprised and happy family—a citizen's house should be transparent to all the world. (*BERNICK seems about to say something but turns quickly and goes into his office.*)

RUMMEL. Well, let us hold our last council of war. Come, Mr. Krap, we want you to supply us with a few facts. (*All the men go into the Consul's office. LONA has lowered all the window-blinds, and is just going to draw the curtain over the open glass-door when OLAF jumps down from above upon the garden stair; he has a plaid over his shoulder and a bundle in his hand.*)

LONA. Good heavens, child, how you frightened me!

OLAF (*hiding the bundle*). Hush, aunt!

LONA. Why did you jump out at the window? Where are you going?

OLAF. Hush, don't say anything, aunt. I am going to Uncle Johan; only down to the pier, you understand;—only to say good-by to him. Good night, aunt!

*(He runs out through the garden.)*

LONA. No! stop! Olaf—Olaf!

JOHAN TÖNNESEN, *dressed for a journey, with a bag over his shoulder, steals in by the door on the right.*

JOHAN. Lona!

LONA *(turning)*. What! you here again?

JOHAN. There are still a few minutes to spare. I must see her once more. We cannot part so.

MARTHA and DINA, *both with cloaks on, and the latter with a little knapsack in her hand, enter from the furthest back door on the left.*

DINA. To him; to him!

MARTHA. Yes, you shall go to him, Dina!

DINA. There he is!

JOHAN. Dina!

DINA. Take me with you!

JOHAN. What!

LONA. You will?

DINA. Yes, take me with you. The other one has written to me saying that this evening it shall be announced publicly to everyone—

JOHAN. Dina—you do not love him?

DINA. I never have loved the man. I would rather be at the bottom of the fjord than be betrothed to him!

Oh, how he seemed to make me grovel before him yesterday with his patronizing words! How he made me feel that he was stooping to an abject creature! I will not be despised any more! I will go away! May I come with you?

JOHAN. Yes, yes—a thousand times yes!

DINA. I shall not be a burden on you long. Only help me over there; help me to make a start——

JOHAN. Hurrah! We'll manage all that, Dina!

LONA (*pointing to the Consul's door*). Hush; don't speak so loud.

JOHAN. Dina, I shall shield and protect you.

DINA. I will not allow you to. I will make my own way; over there I shall manage well enough. Only let me get away from here. Oh, these women—you do not know—they have written to me to-day; they have exhorted me to appreciate my good fortune; they have impressed upon me what magnanimity he has shown. To-morrow and forever after, they will be watching me to see whether I render myself worthy of it all. I am sick of all this goodness.

JOHAN. Tell me, Dina, is that your only reason for coming? Am I nothing to you?

DINA. Yes, Johan, you are more to me than anyone else.

JOHAN. Oh, Dina!

DINA. They all say here that I must hate and detest you; that it is my duty; but I don't understand what they mean by duty; I never could understand it.

LONA. And you never shall, my child!

MARTHA. No, you shall not, and that is why you must go with him as his wife.



JOHAN. Yes, yes!

LONA. What? Now I must kiss you, Martha! I did not expect this of you.

MARTHA. No, I daresay not; I did not expect it myself. But sooner or later the crisis was bound to come. Oh, how we writhe under this tyranny of custom and convention! Rebel against it, Dina. Become his wife! Do something to defy all this use-and-wont!

JOHAN. What is your answer, Dina?

DINA. Yes, I will be your wife.

JOHAN. Dina!

DINA. But first I will work, and become something for myself, just as you are. I will give myself, I will not be taken.

LONA. Right, right! So it should be!

JOHAN. Good; I shall wait and hope——

LONA. And win too, boy! But now, on board!

JOHAN. Yes, on board! Ah, Lona, my dear sister, one word; come here—— (*He leads her up toward the background and talks quietly to her.*)

MARTHA. Dina, you happy one—let me look at you and kiss you once more—for the last time.

DINA. Not the last time; no, my dear, dear aunt; we shall meet again.

MARTHA. Never! Promise me, Dina, never to come back again. (*Takes both her hands and looks into her face.*) Now go to your happiness, my dear child, over the sea. Oh, how often have I sat in the school-room and longed to be over there! It must be beautiful there; the heaven is wider; the clouds sail higher than here; a freer air streams over the heads of the people——

DINA. Oh, Aunt Martha, you will follow us some day.

MARTHA. I? Never, never. My little life-work lies here, and now I think I can be fully and wholly what I should be.

DINA. I cannot think of being parted from you.

MARTHA. Ah, one can part from so much, Dina. (*Kisses her.*) But you will never know it, my sweet child. Promise me to make him happy.

DINA. I will not promise anything. I hate this promising; things must come as they can.

MARTHA. Yes, yes, so they must; you need only remain as you are—true, and faithful to yourself.

DINA. That I will, Aunt Martha.

LONA (*puts in her pocket some papers which Johan has given her*). Good, good, my dear boy. But now, away.

JOHAN. Yes, now there's no time to be lost. Good-by, Lona; thank you for all your love for me. Good-by, Martha, and thanks to you, too, for your true friendship.

MARTHA. Good-by, Johan! Good-by, Dina! And happiness be over all your days! (*She and LONA hurry them toward the door in the background. JOHAN TÖNNESEN and DINA go quickly out through the garden. LONA shuts the door and draws the curtain.*)

LONA. Now we are alone, Martha. You have lost her, and I him.

MARTHA. You—him?

LONA. Oh, I had half lost him already over there. The boy longed to stand on his own feet; so I made him think *I* was longing for home.

MARTHA. That was it? Now I understand why you came. But he will want you back again, Lona.

LONA. An old step-sister—what can he want with her now? Men snap many bonds to arrive at happiness.

MARTHA. It is so, sometimes.

LONA. But now we two must hold together, Martha.

MARTHA. Can I be anything to you?

LONA. Who more? We two foster-mothers—have we not both lost our children? Now we are alone.

MARTHA. Yes, alone. And therefore I will tell you—I have loved him more than all the world.

LONA. Martha! (*Seizes her arm.*) Is this the truth?

MARTHA. My whole life lies in the words. I have loved him, and waited for him. From summer to summer I have looked for his coming. And then he came—but he did not see me.

LONA. Loved him! and it was you that gave his happiness into his hands.

MARTHA. Should I not have given him his happiness, since I loved him? Yes, I have loved him. My whole life has been for him, ever since he went away. What reason had I to hope, you ask? Well, I think I had *some* reason. But then, when he came again—it seemed as if everything were wiped out of his memory. He did not see me.

LONA. It was Dina that overshadowed you, Martha.

MARTHA. It is well that she did? When he went away we were of the same age; when I saw him again—oh, that horrible moment—it seemed to me that I was ten years older than he. He had lived in the bright, quivering sunshine, and drunk in youth and health at every breath; and here sat I the while, spinning and spinning——

LONA. The thread of his happiness, Martha.

MARTHA. Yes, it was gold I spun. No bitterness! Is it not true, Lona, we have been two good sisters to him?

LONA (*embraces her*). Martha!

CONSUL BERNICK *comes out of his room.*

BERNICK (*to the men inside*). Yes, yes, manage the whole thing as you please. When the time comes, I shall be ready—— (*Shuts the door.*) Ah, are you there? Listen, Martha, you must look to your dress a little. And tell Betty to do the same. I don't want anything gorgeous, you know; just homely neatness. But you must be quick.

LONA. And you must look pleased and happy, Martha; no tears in your eyes.

BERNICK. Olaf must come down too. I will have him at my side.

LONA. H'm, Olaf——

MARTHA. I'll tell Betty. (*She goes out by the furthest back door to the left.*)

LONA. Well, so the great and solemn hour has come.

BERNICK (*goes restlessly up and down*). Yes, it has come.

LONA. At such a time a man must feel proud and happy, I should think.

BERNICK (*looks at her*). H'm.

LONA. The whole town is to be illuminated, I hear.

BERNICK. Yes, I believe there's some such idea.

LONA. All the clubs will turn out with their banners—Your name will shine in letters of fire. To-night it will be telegraphed to all corners of the country:—“Surrounded by his happy family, Consul Bernick re-

ceived the homage of his fellow-citizens as one of the pillars of society."

BERNICK. So it will ; and they will hurrah outside, and the people will call me forward into the doorway there, and I shall have to bow and thank them.

LONA. Have to—— ?

BERNICK. Do you think I feel happy at such a time ?

LONA. No, I do not think that you can feel thoroughly happy.

BERNICK. Lona, you despise me.

LONA. Not yet.

BERNICK. And you have no right to. Not to *despise* me !—Lona, you cannot conceive how unspeakably alone I stand here in this narrow, stunted society—how I have had, year by year, to suppress my longing for a full and satisfying life-work. What are my achievements, manifold as they seem ? Scrap-work—odds and ends. But for other work or greater work there is no room here. If I tried to go a step in advance of the views and ideas which happened to be those of the day, all my power was gone. Do you know what we are, we, who are reckoned the pillars of society ? We are the tools of society, neither more nor less.

LONA. Why do you only see this now ?

BERNICK. Because I have been thinking much lately—since you came home—and most of all this evening. Oh, Lona, why did I not know you to the core, then, in the old days ?

LONA. What then ?

BERNICK. I should never have given you up ; and, if I had had you, I should not have stood where I stand now.

LONA. And do you never think what she might have been to you, she, whom you chose in my stead?

BERNICK. I know, at any rate, that she has been to me nothing of what I required.

LONA. Because you have never shared your life-work with her; because you have never placed her in a free and true relation to you; because you have allowed her to go on pining under the weight of shame you cast upon those nearest her.

BERNICK. Yes, yes, yes; it all comes of the lie and the pretence.

LONA. Then, why do you not break with all this lying and pretence.

BERNICK. Now? Now it is too late, Lona.

LONA. Karsten, tell me—what satisfaction does this show and deception give you.

BERNICK. It gives *me* none. I must sink along with the whole of this bungled social system. But a new generation will grow up after us; it is my son I am working for; it is for him that I am preparing a life-task. There will come a time when truth shall spread through the life of our society, and upon it he shall found a happier life than his father's.

LONA. With a lie for its ground-work? Reflect what it is you are giving your son for an inheritance.

BERNICK (*with suppressed despair*). I am giving him a thousand times worse inheritance than you know of. But, sooner or later, the curse must pass away. And yet—and yet—— (*Breaking off.*) How could you bring all this upon my head! But it is done now. I must go on now. You *shall* not succeed in crushing me!

HILMAR TÖNNESEN, *with an open note in his hand, and much discomposed, enters quickly from the right.*

HILMAR. Why, this is——Betty, Betty!

BERNICK. What now? Are they coming already?

HILMAR. No, no; but I must speak to someone at once. (*He goes out by the furthest back door on the left.*)

LONA. Karsten, you say we came to crush you. Then let me tell you what stuff he is made of, this prodigal son whom your moral society shrinks from as if he were plague-struck. He has nothing more to do with you, for he has gone away.

BERNICK. But he is coming back——

LONA. Johan will never come back. He has gone for ever, and Dina has gone with him.

BERNICK. Gone for ever? And Dina gone with him?

LONA. Yes, to be his wife. That is how these two strike your virtuous society in the face, as I once——  
No matter!

BERNICK. Gone!—she too!—in the *Indian Girl*?

LONA. No, he dared not trust such a precious freight to that rotten old tub. Johan and Dina have gone in the *Palm Tree*.

BERNICK. Ah! And so—in vain—— (*Rushes to the door of his office, tears it open, and calls in.*) Krap, stop the *Indian Girl*; she mustn't sail to-night.

KRAP (*inside*). The *Indian Girl* is already standing out to sea, Consul.

BERNICK (*shuts the door, and says feebly*). Too late—and all for nothing.

LONA. What do you mean?

BERNICK. Nothing, nothing Leave me——!

LONA. H'm. Listen, Karsten. Johan told me to tell you that he leaves in my hands the good name he once lent to you, and also that which you stole from him while he was far away. Johan will be silent; and I can do or let alone in this matter, as I will. See, I hold in my hand your two letters.

BERNICK. You have them! And now—now you will—this very night—perhaps when the procession—

LONA. I did not come here to betray you, but to make you speak out of your own accord. I have failed. Remain standing in the lie. See; I tear your two letters to pieces. Take the pieces; here they are. Now, there is nothing to bear witness against you, Karsten. Now you are safe; be happy too—if you can.

BERNICK (*deeply moved*). Lona, why did you not do this before? It is too late now; my whole life is ruined now; I cannot live after to-day.

LONA. What has happened?

BERNICK. Do not ask me. And yet I *must* live! I *will* live—for Olaf's sake. He shall restore all and expiate all—

LONA. Karsten——!

HILMAR TÖNNESEN *enters again rapidly.*

HILMAR. No one to be found; all away; not even Betty!

BERNICK. What is the matter with you?

HILMAR. I dare not tell you.

BERNICK. What is it? You must and shall tell me!

HILMAR. Well, then, Olaf has run away in the *Indian Girl*.



BERNICK (*staggering backward*). Olaf—in the *Indian Girl*! No, no!

LONA. Yes, he has! Now I understand; I saw him jump out of the window.

BERNICK (*at the door of his room, calls out in despair*). Krap, stop the *Indian Girl* at any cost!

KRAP (*comes in the room*). Impossible, Consul. How can you think that——

BERNICK. We must stop it! Olaf is on board!

KRAP. What do you say?

RUMMEL (*enters from the office*). Olaf run away? Impossible!

SANDSTAD (*enters from the office*). He will be sent back with the pilot, Consul.

HILMAR. No, no; he has written to me (*showing the letter*); he says he is going to hide among the cargo until they are fairly out to sea.

BERNICK. I shall never see him again!

RUMMEL. Oh, nonsense; a good strong ship, newly repaired——

VIGELAND (*who has also come in*). And in your own yard, too, Consul.

BERNICK. I shall never see him again, I tell you. I have lost him; Lona and—I see it now—he has never been really mine. (*Listens*). What is that?

RUMMEL. Music. The procession is coming.

BERNICK. I cannot, I will not receive anyone.

RUMMEL. What are you thinking of? It is impossible——

SANDSTAD. Impossible, Consul; think how much is at stake for yourself.

BERNICK. What does it all matter to me now? Whom have I now to work for?

RUMMEL. Can you ask? You have us and the community.

VIGELAND. Yes, that is very true.

SANDSTAD. And surely, Consul, you do not forget that we——

MARTHA enters by the farthest back door on the left. *Low music is heard far down the street.*

MARTHA. Here comes the procession; but Betty is not at home; I can't understand where she——

BERNICK. Not at home! There, you see, Lona; no support either in joy or sorrow.

RUMMEL. Up with the blinds. Come and help me, Mr. Krap! You too, Sandstad! What a terrible pity that the family should be disunited just at this moment; quite against the programme. (*The blinds are drawn up from the door and windows. The whole street is seen to be illuminated. On the house opposite is a large transparency with the inscription, "Long live Karsten Bernick, the Pillar of our Society!"*)

BERNICK (*shrinking back*). Away with all this! I will not look at it! Out with it, out with it!

RUMMEL. Are you in your senses, may I ask?

MARTHA. What is the matter with him, Lona?

LONA. Hush! (*Whispers to her.*)

BERNICK. Away with the mocking words, I say! Do you not see all these lights are gibing at us?

RUMMEL. Well, I must say——

BERNICK. Oh, you know nothing——! But I, I——! All these are the lights in a dead-room!

KRAP. H'm?

RUMMEL. Well, but really, now—you make far too much of it.

SANDSTAD. The boy will have a trip over the Atlantic, and then you'll have him back again.

VIGELAND. Only put your trust in the Almighty, Consul.

RUMMEL. And in the ship, Bernick; it'll weather the storm safe enough.

KRAP. H'm!

RUMMEL. Why, if it were one of these coffin ships we hear of in the great communities——

BERNICK. I can feel my very hair growing gray.

MRS. BERNICK, *with a large shawl over her head, comes through the garden door.*

MRS. BERNICK. Karsten, Karsten, do you know——?

BERNICK. Yes, I know——; but you—you who can see nothing—you who haven't a mother's care for him——!

MRS. BERNICK. Oh, listen to me——!

BERNICK. Why did you not watch over him? Now I have lost him. Give me him back again, if you can!

MRS. BERNICK. I can, I can; I have got him!

BERNICK. You have got him!

THE MEN. Ah!

HILMAR. Ah, I thought so.

MARTHA. Now you have him again, Karsten!

LONA. Yes; and now win him as well!

BERNICK. You have got him! Is it true what you say? Where is he?

MRS. BERNICK. I shall not tell you until you have forgiven him.

BERNICK. Oh, forgiven, forgiven——! But how did you come to know——?

MRS. BERNICK. Do you think a mother does not see? I was in mortal terror lest you should find it out. A few words he let fall yesterday——; and his room being empty, and his knapsack and clothes gone——

BERNICK. Yes, yes——?

MRS. BERNICK. I ran; I got hold of Aune; we went out in his sailing-boat; the American ship was on the point of sailing. Thank Heaven, we arrived in time—we got on board—we looked in the hold—and we found him. Oh, Karsten, you must not punish him!

BERNICK. Betty!

MRS. BERNICK. Nor Aune either!

BERNICK. Aune? What do you know of him? Is the *Indian Girl* under sail again?

MRS. BERNICK. No, that is just the thing——

BERNICK. Speak, speak!

MRS. BERNICK. Aune was as much alarmed as I; the search took some time, the darkness increased, and the pilot made objections; and so Aune ventured—in your name——

BERNICK. Well?

MRS. BERNICK. To stop the ship till to-morrow.

KRAP. H'ld——

BERNICK. Oh, what unspeakable happiness!

MRS. BERNICK. You are not angry?

BERNICK. Oh, what surpassing happiness, Betty!

RUMMEL. Why, you're absurdly nervous.

HILMAR. Yes; whenever there's a question of a little struggle with the elements, then—ugh!

KRAP (*at the window*). The procession is coming through the garden gate, Consul.

BERNICK. Yes, now let them come!

RUMMEL. The whole garden is full of people.

SANDSTAD. The very street is full.

RUMMEL. The whole town has turned out, Bernick. This is really an inspiring moment.

VIGELAND. Let us take it in a humble spirit, Rummel.

RUMMEL. All the banners are out. What a procession! Ah, here is the committee, with Rector Rörlund at its head.

BERNICK. Let them come, I say!

RUMMEL. But listen; in your excited state of mind——

BERNICK. What, then?

RUMMEL. Why, I should not mind speaking for you.

BERNICK. No, thank you; to-night I shall speak myself.

RUMMEL. Do you know, then, what you have got to say?

BERNICK. Yes, don't be alarmed, Rummel—now I know what I have to say. (*The music has meanwhile ceased. The garden door is thrown open. RECTOR RÖRLUND enters at the head of the Committee, accompanied by two porters, carrying a covered basket. After them come townspeople of all classes, as many as the room will hold. An immense crowd, with banners and flags, can be seen out in the garden, and in the street.*)

RÖRLUND. Consul Bernick! I see from the surprise depicted in your countenance, that it is as unexpected guests we force ourselves upon you in your happy family-circle, at your peaceful hearth, surrounded by upright and public-spirited friends and fellow-citizens.

But it is in obedience to a heartfelt impulse that we bring you our homage. It is not the first time we have done so, but it is the first time we have greeted you thus publicly and unanimously. We have often expressed to you our gratitude for the broad moral foundation upon which you have, so to speak, built up our society. This time we chiefly hail in you the clear-sighted, indefatigable, unselfish, nay, self-sacrificing citizen, who has taken the initiative in an undertaking which, we are credibly assured, will give a powerful impetus to the temporal prosperity and well-being of the community.

VOICES (*among the crowd*). Bravo, bravo!

RÖRLUND. Consul Bernick, you have for many years stood before our town as a shining example. I do not speak of your exemplary domestic life, your spotless moral record. Such things should be left to the closet, not proclaimed from the housetops! But I speak of your activity as a citizen, as it lies open to the eyes of all. Well-appointed ships sail from your wharves, and show our flag in the most distant seas. A numerous and happy body of workmen looks up to you as to a father. By calling into existence new branches of industry, you have laid a foundation for the welfare of hundreds of families. In other words—you are in an eminent sense the pillar and corner-stone of this community.

VOICES. Hear, hear! Bravo!

RÖRLUND. And it is just this light of disinterestedness shining over all your actions that is so unspeakably beneficent, especially in these times. You are now on the point of procuring for us—I do not hesitate to say the word plainly and prosaically—a railway.

MANY VOICES. Bravo! bravo!

RÖRLUND. But it seems as though this undertaking were destined to meet with difficulties, principally arising from narrow and selfish interests.

VOICES. Hear, hear! Hear, hear!

RÖRLUND. It is no longer unknown that certain individuals, not belonging to our community, have been beforehand with the energetic citizens of this place, and have obtained possession of certain advantages, which should by rights have fallen to the share of our own town.

VOICES. Yes, yes! Hear, hear!

RÖRLUND. This deplorable fact has, of course, come to your knowledge as well, Consul Bernick. But, nevertheless, you continue steadily to pursue your undertaking, well knowing that a patriotic citizen must not be exclusively concerned with the interests of his own parish.

DIFFERENT VOICES. H'm! No, no! Yes, yes!

RÖRLUND. We have assembled, then, this evening, to do homage, in your person, to the ideal citizen—the model of all the civic virtues. May your undertaking contribute to the true and lasting welfare of this community! The railway is, no doubt, an institution which lays us open to the importation of elements of evil from without, but it is also an institution that helps us to get quickly rid of them. From elements of evil from without we cannot even now keep ourselves quite free. But that we have just on this festal evening, as I hear, happily and more quickly than was expected, got rid of certain elements of this nature——

VOICES. Hush, hush!

RÖRLUND. This I accept as a good omen for the under-

taking. That I touch upon this point here shows that we know ourselves to be in a house where family ties are subordinated to the ethical ideal.

VOICES. Hear, hear! Bravo!

BERNICK (*at the same time*). Permit me——

RÖRLUND. Only a few words more, Consul Bernick. What you have done for this community has certainly not been done in the expectation of any tangible reward. But you cannot reject a slight token of your grateful fellow-citizens' appreciation, least of all on this momentous occasion, when, according to the assurances of practical men, we are standing on the threshold of a new time.

MANY VOICES. Bravo! Hear, hear! Hear, hear! (*He gives the porters a sign; they bring forward the basket; members of the Committee take out and present, during the following speech, the articles mentioned.*)

RÖRLUND. Therefore, I have now, Consul Bernick, to hand you a silver coffee service. Let it grace your board when we in future, as so often in the past, have the pleasure of meeting under this hospitable roof. And you, too, gentlemen, who have so actively co-operated with the first man of our community, we would beg to accept a little remembrance. This silver goblet is for you, Mr. Rummel. You have many a time, amid the ring of wine-cups, done battle in eloquent words for the civic interests of this community; may you often find worthy opportunities to lift and drain this goblet. To you, Mr. Sandstad, I hand this album, with photographs of your fellow-citizens. Your well-known and much-appreciated philanthropy has placed you in the happy position of counting among your friends members of all parties in



the community. And to you, Mr. Vigeland, I have to offer, for the decoration of your domestic sanctum, this book of family devotion, on vellum, and luxuriously bound. Under the ripening influence of years, you have attained to an earnest view of life; your activity in the daily affairs of this world has for a long series of years been purified and ennobled by thoughts of things higher and holier. (*Turns toward the crowd.*) And now, my friends, long live Consul Bernick and his fellow-workers! Hurrah for the Pillars of Society!

THE WHOLE CROWD. Long live Consul Bernick! Long live the Pillars of Society! Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

LOXA. I congratulate you, brother-in-law! (*An expectant silence intervenes.*)

BERNICK (*begins earnestly and slowly*). My fellow-citizens, your spokesman has said that we stand this evening on the threshold of a new time; and there, I hope, he was right. But in order that it may be so, we must bring home to ourselves the truth—the truth which has, until this evening, been utterly and in all things banished from our community. (*Astonishment among the audience.*) I must begin by rejecting the panegyric with which you, Rector Rörlund, according to use and wont on such occasions, have overwhelmed me. I do not deserve it; for until to-day I have not been disinterested in my dealings. If I have not always striven for pecuniary profit, at least I am now conscious that a longing desire for power, influence, and respect has been the motive of most of my actions.

RUMMEL (*half aloud*). What next?

BERNICK. Before my fellow-citizens I do not reproach myself for this; for I still believe that I may place

myself in the first rank among men of practical usefulness.

MANY VOICES. Yes, yes, yes!

BERNICK. But what I do blame myself for is my weakness in condescending to subterfuges, because I knew and feared the tendency of our society to suspect impure motives behind everything a man undertakes. And now I come to a case in point.

RUMMEL (*anxiously*). H'm—h'm!

BERNICK. There are rumors abroad of great sales of property along the projected line. This property I have bought—all of it—I, alone.

SUPPRESSED VOICES. What does he say? The Consul? Consul Bernick?

BERNICK. It is for the present in my hands. Of course, I have confided in my fellow-workers, Messrs. Rummel, Vigeland, and Sandstad, and we have agreed to——

RUMMEL. It is not true! Prove!—prove——!

VIGELAND. We have not agreed to anything!

SANDSTAD. Well, I must say——

BERNICK. Quite right; we have not yet agreed on what I was about to mention. But I am quite sure that these three gentlemen will acquiesce when I say that I have this evening determined to form a joint-stock company for the exploitation of these lands; whoever will can have shares in it.

MANY VOICES. Hurrah! Long live Consul Bernick!

RUMMEL (*aside to BERNICK*). Such mean treachery!

SANDSTAD (*likewise*). Then you have been fooling us——!

VIGELAND. Why then, devil take——! Oh, Lord, what am I saying?

THE CROWD (*outside*). Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!

BERNICK. Silence, gentlemen. I have no right to this homage; for what I have now determined was not my first intention. My intention was to retain the whole myself; and I am still of opinion that the property can be most profitably worked, if it remains in the control of one man. But it is for you to choose. If you wish it, I am willing to manage it for you to the best of my ability.

VOICES. Yes, yes, yes!

BERNICK. But, first, my fellow-citizens must know me to the core. Then let everyone examine himself, and let us realize the prediction, that from this evening we begin a new time. The old, with its tinsel, its hypocrisy, its hollowness, its lying propriety, and its pitiful cowardice, shall lie behind us like a museum, open for instruction; and to this museum we shall present—shall we not, gentlemen?—the coffee-service, and the goblet, and the album, and the family devotions on vellum and luxuriously bound.

RUMMEL. Yes, of course.

VIGELAND (*mutter*s). If you have taken all the rest, why—

SANDSTAD. As you please.

BERNICK. And now to make my settlement with society. It has been said that elements of evil have left us this evening. I can add what you do not know; the man thus alluded to did not go alone; with him went, to become his wife—

LONA (*loudly*). Dina Dorf!

RÖRLUND. What?

MRS. BERNICK. What do you say? (*There is great excitement.*)

RÖRLUND. Fled? Run away—with him? Impossible!

BERNICK. To become his wife, Rector Rörlund. And I have more to add. (*Aside.*) Betty, collect yourself, to bear what is coming. (*Aloud.*) I say, let us bow before that man, for he has nobly taken another's sin upon himself. My fellow-citizens, I will come out of the lie; it had almost poisoned every fibre in my being. You shall know all. Fifteen years ago *I* was the guilty one.

MRS. BERNICK (*in a low and trembling voice*). Karsten!

MARTHA (*likewise*). Oh, Johan——!

LONA. Now at last you have found yourself again. (*Voiceless astonishment among the audience.*)

BERNICK. Yes, my fellow-citizens, I was the guilty one, and he fled. The false and vile rumors which were afterward spread abroad it is now in no human power to disprove. But I cannot complain of this. Fifteen years ago I swung myself aloft upon these rumors; whether I am now to fall with them is for you to decide.

RÖRLUND. What a thunderbolt! The first man in the town! (*Aside to Mrs. Bernick.*) Oh, how I pity you, Mrs. Bernick!

HILMAR. Such a confession! Well, I must say——

BERNICK. But do not decide this evening. I ask everyone to go home—to collect himself—to look into himself. When your minds are calm again, it will be seen whether I have lost or won by speaking out. Good-night! I have still much, very much, to repent of, but that concerns only my own conscience. Good-night! Away with all this show! We all feel that it is out of place here.

RÖRLUND. Certainly it is. (*Aside to Mrs. Bernick.*)

Run away! Then she was unworthy of me, after all. (*Half aloud, to the Committee.*) Yes, gentlemen, after this I think we had better go away quietly.

HILMAR. How, after this, one is to hold high the banner of the ideal, I for one—Ugh! (*The announcement has meanwhile been whispered from mouth to mouth. All the members of the procession retire through the garden. RUMMEL, SANDSTAD, and VIGELAND go off disputing earnestly but softly. CONSUL BERNICK, MRS. BERNICK, MARTHA, LONA, and KRAP alone remain in the room. There is a short silence.*)

BERNICK. Betty, can you forgive me?

MRS. BERNICK (*looks smilingly at him*). Do you know, Karsten, you have opened to me the brightest hope I have had for many years?

BERNICK. How?

MRS. BERNICK. For many years I have believed that you had once been mine, and I had lost you. Now I know that you never were mine; but I shall win you.

BERNICK (*embracing her*). Oh, Betty, you have won me. Through Lona I have at last learned to know you aright. But now let Olaf come.

MRS. BERNICK. Yes, now you shall have him. Mr. Krap——! (*She whispers to him in the background. He goes out by the garden door. During the following all the transparencies and lights in the houses are put out one by one.*)

BERNICK (*softly*). Thanks, Lona; you have saved what is best in me—and for me.

LONA. What else did I intend?

BERNICK. Yes, what—what did you intend? I cannot fathom you.

LONA. H'm——

BERNICK. Then it was not hatred? Not revenge?  
Why did you come over?

LONA. Old friendship does not rust.

BERNICK. Lona!

LONA. When Johan told me all that about the lie, I swore to myself: The hero of my youth shall stand free and true.

BERNICK. Oh, how little have I, pitiful creature, deserved this of you!

LONA. Yes, if we women always asked for deserts, Karsten——!

*AUNE and OLAF enter from the garden.*

BERNICK (*rushing to him*). Olaf!

OLAF. Father, I promise never to do it again.

BERNICK. To run away?

OLAF. Yes, yes, I promise, father.

BERNICK. And I promise that you shall never have reason to. Henceforth you shall be allowed to grow up, not as the heir of my life-work, but as one who has a life-work of his own to come.

OLAF. And shall I be allowed to be what I like?

BERNICK. Whatever you like.

OLAF. Thank you, father. Then I shall not be a Pillar of Society.

BERNICK. Oh! Why not?

OLAF. Oh, I think it must be so tiresome.

BERNICK. You shall be yourself, Olaf; and the rest may go as it will. And you, Aune——

AUNE. I know it, Consul; I am dismissed.

BERNICK. We will remain together, Aune ; and forgive me——

AUNE. What? The ship does not sail to-night?

BERNICK. Nor yet to-morrow. I gave you too short time. It must be looked to more thoroughly.

AUNE. It shall be, Consul, and with the new machines!

BERNICK. So be it. But thoroughly and uprightly. There are many among us that need thorough and upright repairs. So good-night, Aune.

AUNE. Good-night, Consul ; and thanks, thanks, thanks.

*(He goes out to the right.)*

MRS. BERNICK. Now they are all gone.

BERNICK. And we are alone. My name no longer shines in the transparencies ; all the lights are put out in the windows.

LONA. Would you have them lighted again?

BERNICK. Not for all the world. Where have I been? You will be horrified when you know. Now, I feel as if I had just recovered my senses after being poisoned. But I feel—I feel that I *can* be young and strong again. Oh, come nearer—closer around me. Come, Betty! Come, Olaf! Come, Martha! Oh, Martha, it seems as though I had never seen you in all these years.

LONA. No, I daresay not ; your society is a society of bachelor-souls ; you have no eyes for Woman.

BERNICK. True, true ; and therefore, of course, it is agreed, LONA—you will never leave Betty and me?

MRS. BERNICK. No, LONA ; you must not!

LONA. No ; how could I think of going away and leaving you young people, just beginning life? Am I not your foster-mother? You and I, Martha, we are the two old aunts. What are you looking at?

MARTHA. How the sky is clearing ; how it grows light over the sea. The *Palm Tree* has fortune with it——

LONA. And happiness on board.

BERNICK. And we—we have a long, earnest day of work before us ; I most of all. But let it come ; gather close around me, you true and faithful women. I have learned this, in these days : it is you women who are the Pillars of Society.

LONA. Then you have learned a poor wisdom, brother-in-law. (*Lays her hand firmly upon his shoulder.*) No, no ; the spirits of Truth and of Freedom—these are the Pillars of Society.



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